LOUIS XIV. IN COURT . . AND CAMP . .

By Lieut.-Col. ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD, D.S.O.

SIDELIGHTS ON THE COURT OF FRANCE.

With Seventeen Portraits.

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Louis XIV

LOUIS XIV

IN COURT AND CAMP

By Lieut.-Colonel ANDREW C. P. HAGGARD, D.S.O. Author of "Sidelights on the Court of France" "Under Crescent and Star," etc. . . .

WITH TWENTY ILLUSTRATIONS
INCLUDING A PHOTOGRAVURE PLATE

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PREFACE

"*Culottes!* I know what that means: something they wore during the French Revolution."

Such was the *naïve* remark made one day, by a young lady learning French, to the author of the following pages. It dawned upon him that the expression *sans-culottes*, and that historical shibboleth "The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes," were about as much of French history as he had himself learned at school, although in later life he had made a special study of the annals of France.

Thinking that entertainment and instruction might be imparted to others by setting down, in simple English language, such facts as he had himself learned from French writers, he presented to the world his *Sidelights on the Court of France*. The favourable reception accorded to that work, which dealt with the period from François I. to Louis XIII., and especially with that popular hero Henri de Navarre, has emboldened him to return once more to the Courts and camps of modern Gaul.

The reign of the third of the Bourbon Kings, which lasted for seventy-two years, is full of incident from start to finish.

Wars, love-makings, poisonings, persecutions, intrigues, and imprisonments follow each upon the heels of the other. From the day when Anne of Austria and her beloved Mazarin first took up the reins of power, until that when Madame de Maintenon, hurrying away from the bedside of le Grand Monarque, made way for the profligate Regent, Philippe d'Orléans, and the weasel-faced Dubois, all is excitement.

Nor is the period so far remote from our own times as it would seem. When the writer of these lines, as a young man, joined the army in 1873, he left, still hale and hearty, two old friends whose father and mother had both been born before the close of the reign of Louis XIV. It is, therefore, worth while perusing the annals of Louis "*Dieudonné*," if but to note the immense difference, alike in the world of Christianity and the world of Society, in the short space of three lifetimes.

What was the condition of things in France when the first of those lives commenced will be found portrayed in the present volume.

Although the conditions of existence at the French Court have, like those of our own Courts down to the times of the Georges, ever been such as to call for reprobation from the point of view of morality, this history of its events by no means aims at being a mere *chronique scandaleuse*: it has a more serious purpose. Therefore, while striving to attain fidelity of relation of the deeds of men and women who were, unfortunately, not always good as well as great, many scandalous circumstances have been excluded.

Owing to the discrepancy among different writers upon certain points and dates, and the involved language with which he has had at times to contend in the original French, the author craves the indulgence of the reader who may find an event related in a different manner to that of his preconceived notions.

Above all, he has striven to be accurate ; while to such as may exclaim, as did two reviewers of the work above-mentioned, " We find nothing new in these pages ! " the author would make an observation. This is, that nothing is new in history ! Nevertheless, there is often difficulty in getting at the truth, which can only be arrived at by long and careful search in many directions ; while all have not the time to seek for themselves. When the truth has been found, what may then be new is the manner of its telling, by those who have spent many days in its pursuit.

It is the earnest hope of the author that the simple language which he has employed, without the faintest pretence at style, may prove successful in portraying clearly the many tragic events of the reign of Louis XIV., as also the circumstances of his love-affairs with Madame Henriette, Louise de la Vallière, the Marquise de Montespan, Mademoiselle de Fontanges, and Madame de Maintenon.

While the intricate story of the various stages of the Fronde, with its Retz, its " Grand " Condé, and the heroic epics of its ladies on horseback, has been carefully unravelled, particular pains have been taken with the events leading up to and during the terrible epoch of the Revocation.

Equal effort has been exerted to present a life-like picture of the hospitals, prisons, and galleys ; as well as in showing

the miserable condition to which both the Court and the country reverted, after the cruelties of the King had counteracted the benefits arising from the constructive zeal of Colbert.

What will be remarked, by those who follow Louis XIV., in Court and camp, throughout his career, is how much more his mind was actuated by religious than by political principles and aims.

To the very last he was the same! After the Peace of Utrecht, when France lay groaning in misery and humiliated, as a result of the devastating war, he risked its re-commencement, rather than please Queen Anne in the matter of the release of some unhappy Protestants whom he had consigned to an awful fate in the galleys. Nor, indeed, were some of these miserable martyrs released until the time of the tolerant and irreligious Regent.

It was the same in the matter of his persecution of his co-religionists, the Jansenists. The King died, literally while endeavouring to force upon them and the world at large the monstrous Bull which made of the Pope a god!

The whole reign, after, upon the death of the indifferent Cardinal Mazarin, Louis himself assumed the power, was one of arbitrary religion. Yet was this Jesuit-ridden reign of Louis XIV. one of the most cruel that the world has ever seen, not excepting that of Spain under Philip II.

There, under Philip V., the French grandson of Louis, and his second Italian wife, the horrible burnings of men and women were still taking place, in the presence of the Royal couple, long after the death of the grandsire at

Versailles. Upon April 7th, 1720, nine men and eight women were burned; upon May 18th, in the same year, seven more men and five more women perished in the flames; and so it went on for years longer.

Nevertheless, nothing that took place in Spain exceeded the tortures and cruelties to mind and body inflicted by priests and soldiers alike in France, in the awful days of the Dragonnades and the Protestant insurrection in the Cévennes.

A whole Protestant population was crushed—wiped out, annihilated; the most useful and well-living classes in France were driven out, to the benefit of other nations, or destroyed by cold-blooded murder, only too frequently preceded by ruthless rapine, torture, and robbery!

Those who would be enlightened upon these and other circumstances connected with the reign of Louis XIV.—a monster of vice who ruled in the name of religion—will find full details set out in the following pages.

ANDREW HAGGARD.

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LOUIS XIV.
IN COURT AND CAMP

CHAPTER I

The Great Condé and Rocroy

1643

When, upon May 14th, 1643, Louis XIII. breathed his last, Europe was still in the throes of the Thirty Years' War. In dying, the King had endeavoured, by binding the hands of his widow with a Council of Regency, to carry out the views of Richelieu, the Great Cardinal, who had only died a few months before the Monarch whom he had ruled.

This Council consisted of Monsieur—Gaston, Duc d'Orléans—as nominal chief, with whom were associated the Prince de Condé, Cardinal Mazarin, Bouthillier, and the Comte de Chavigny, son of Bouthillier, or, as commonly reputed, the son of Richelieu.

Unpopular, however, as had been Anne of Austria with the people of France, no sooner was the body of her husband stiffening upon the bed of death than the unstable Queen found herself the favourite of a Court and Parliament as unstable as herself. The timorous and ever-plotting Gaston, seeing the direction of the popular wind, instantly renounced his authority, Condé followed suit, while the decision of M. Talon, the Advocate-General, enabled the Queen to declare herself free from the control of the other members of the Council of Regency. Weak woman as was the Queen, one whose career, ever since her youthful

loves for the Duc de Montmorency and the Duke of Buckingham, had been one of continued gallantry, it was only natural that the nation of France expected to find the rule of Anne prove one of the heart rather than one of the head.

Nor were they mistaken in the first measures taken by the flighty woman. For, placing for the moment on one side her lover—or, as the Duchesse d'Orléans, mother of the Regent, says, her husband, Mazarin—the Queen instantly selected as her knight a very young and handsome boy of half her age.

This was the Duc de Beaufort, grandson of Gabrielle d'Estrées, the mistress of Henri IV., whose son the Duc de Vendôme that king had forced upon the unwilling daughter of the ducal house of Montpensier. Relying upon the affection openly shown to him by the Queen, this young scion of the house of Vendôme soon contrived to make himself very unpopular with the great nobles of the Court. For even upon the very day of the Queen's accession to the Regency, when the nobles were thronging around her Majesty to offer their homage and congratulations, the lad, for he was scarcely more, took upon himself to act as though he were master of the house. He rudely told the courtiers to keep back and not to crush the Queen, notably speaking to the Prince de Condé in an unbecoming manner. Notwithstanding the irritation thus caused, it was to the Duc de Beaufort that Anne of Austria turned for the protection of the child-King Louis XIV. from any possible attempts on behalf of the Orléans party to obtain possession of his person.

Had this young man, apparently so secure in the royal favour, known but how to play his cards well, he might have played a great part in history. Unfortunately for him, he took too much after the nature of his grandfather Henri de Navarre, and the connection which he formed with the beautiful Duchesse de Montbazon was soon a cause of irritation to the Queen in more ways than one. In conjunction with this lady of regal bearing but jealous nature, Beaufort continued his insults to the family of

Condé by making known to the Queen the light behaviour of a young lady who posed as a prude herself, while being unsparing in her remarks as to the conduct of others. This was that universally acknowledged beauty the Duchesse de Longueville, daughter of the Prince de Condé. The moment, however, selected by Madame de Montbazon to bring to light two letters of a compromising nature from young Madame de Longueville to the Comte de Chavigny, was an inauspicious one. For the Duc d'Enghien, her brother, later known as Le Grand Condé, had recently most brilliantly defeated the Spaniards at Rocroy. The position, therefore, of all connected with the house of Condé was for the moment unassailable. Madame de Longueville came out of the contest with Madame de Montbazon before the Queen with flying colours, especially as the shifty Italian Mazarin had selected this moment for openly declaring his humble attachment to the Duc d'Enghien, and thrown his weight in the balance against Beaufort and his mistress.

The result was, that while the Duchesse de Montbazon was ordered by the Queen-Regent to apologise to Madame de Longueville and Beaufort was disgraced, Cardinal Mazarin floated back into power again, as it were upon the back of the younger Condé. It was in vain that fourteen of the great nobles offered their swords to Madame de Montbazon, that all the Court was in an uproar. In vain also were the tears of the Queen shed on behalf of her handsome young favourite. Mazarin, with the Condés behind him, exerted over the Queen an influence which seemed to be in effect that of a husband, with the result that, despite the reluctance of Anne, it was by her own order that, for a time, the young Duc and his partisans were placed under arrest in the Bastille.

Although the Duc d'Enghien, at the time of Rocroy a young man of about twenty-two, has been called the Great Condé, it is doubtful whether there was anything in this Prince to deserve the name any more than did his father before him. And what a despicable man was the

husband of the beautiful Charlotte de Montmorency, those who have read the story of the love affair of Henri IV. and that lady and the circumstances of the marriage know but too well. The disloyal part enacted by the Prince de Condé to his near relative and benefactor the King, after the marriage, as well as the infamous greed which he displayed in securing the possessions of his wife's brother the Duc de Montmorency, when beheaded for treason against Louis XIII., will stamp for ever the elder Condé as infamous. Nor, although he undoubtedly possessed courage—brutal, bulldog-like courage—were the virtues of the son any more conspicuous. Let us investigate his career from early youth, that we may understand what sort of a young man was Louis, Duc d'Enghien, at the moment of the accession of the five-year-old Louis XIV.

Born of a notoriously loveless union, the boy was well educated by his time-serving father, who, after cringing to Cardinal Richelieu until he had become rich and powerful, foresaw in his elder son the means of still further augmenting the wealth and power of his house. He was educated under the Jesuits at Bourges, and after instruction in literature and languages, history and mathematics, his studies were particularly directed towards the arts of fortification, in which he proved an apt pupil. At the age of twenty, after having already for a time held one of his father's governments, that of Burgundy, he was married to Mademoiselle de Brézé, the twelve-year-old niece of Cardinal Richelieu, whom he neglected, hoping to get rid of her and marry the enormously rich heiress Mademoiselle de Montpensier. In this intention, however, he was frustrated by the fury of the great Cardinal.

The appearance of the youth was that of a vulture more than that of a man, his long, curved nose resembling a beak, while his narrow face and absence of forehead increased the resemblance. He had dark, narrow eyes, which were extremely brilliant, and which, while fierce looking, yet contained a cunning, shifty expression. In complexion he was saturnine. The expression of the mouth was

nothing if not cruel, while the chin was heavy and slightly receding. Such, then, was le Grand Condé! No greater contrast could there possibly have been than between him and the light-hearted Condé of the time of the Civil Wars, in the days of Catherine de Médicis and her sons. He used always to be popularly described as—

> Le petit homme tant joli
> Qui toujours chante et toujours rit.

The difference in the grandson would have been difficult to understand, had not the infidelity of the wife of "Le petit homme" been openly declared by the court of law which also found her guilty of his murder.

Notwithstanding his appearance of a bird of prey, the young Enghien showed at the early age of nineteen that he had the making of a soldier in him, for the first time that he was under fire, in the campaign before Arras in 1640, he behaved with marked bravery. If brave, that he was, however, hypocritical in the extreme, is exemplified by the manner in which, like his father before him, he cringed at the feet of Richelieu, and in the pretence which he made of taking an interest in the religious schemes of the devout Louis XIII. simply in order that he might advance his own temporal welfare.

The result of this time-service soon became apparent by the favouritism shown by Louis XIII. to the young soldier. Throughout the winter following the death of the Great Cardinal, Louis himself it was who from his sick-bed in Paris directed the operations of the various armies in the field. In this arduous task he was aided by the restless and indefatigable Sublet Dunoyer, whose energy had been proved as only equalled by his incapacity when sent some years previously, by Richelieu, on a tour of inspection of the fortresses in the north of France. Despite the disaster which ensued when the subsequent invasion by the Allies laid the whole of Picardy and Champagne in waste, Dunoyer had always retained the confidence of the Cardinal. He had also, by his excessive attention to his devotions,

preserved the affection of the King until discovered plotting with the Queen, a month or two before the death of Louis, when the King roughly dismissed him. In the meantime, however, the devout couple had organised a triumphal campaign for a Royal army, of which the devout young Prince was to be the nominal head.

The other forces in the field—that in Germany under the gallant drunkard Rantzau, that under Guébriant, which had recently saved the Swedes from destruction—were to be left without reinforcement for this laudable object, even although the heroic army under Guébriant, which before his death had been that of the brilliant soldier of fortune Weimar, was now reduced to only six thousand men. These were struggling for bare existence in Alsace, when a fine force of sixteen thousand infantry and seven thousand cavalry was placed by the King at the disposition of the young man twenty-two years old. It would not, however, have been like Louis XIII. if, with his love of meddling, he had left the Duc d'Enghien unhampered in command of this fine army, chiefly composed of old and tried soldiers of many a battle. He associated with him an incompetent person named L'Hospital. He was the brother of de Vitry, Captain of the King's Guards, who had assassinated Concini, the arrogant lover of Marie de Médicis, and thus rescued Louis when a boy from a condition almost resembling imprisonment in his mother's palace the Louvre.

Louis appointed L'Hospital to the rank of Maréchal de France before despatching him to the war with the youthful General to whom he was instructed to act as mentor. There is not the slightest doubt but that had Louis not been almost at the point of death at the time, he would have accompanied the army himself. For foolish as he was in many ways, petty, girlish, cruel in the name of religion, there was one trait in the character of Louis XIII. which can but be admired. This was his personal bravery, which led him, always a miserable invalid, time after time to be present in his wars in person, even when not in actual command. Indeed, nothing can be recorded in history more pathetic

than the manner in which, in the dead of winter, whether in the Alps of Savoy or the passes of the Pyrenees, the sickly King used to accompany his suffering minister Richelieu to the field of combat, each having to be borne in his litter. Nor were his successes like those of Louis XIV., merely the work of the brave soldiers under him. At the storming of the Pass of Susa in Savoy, one of the most gallant deeds in history, the two invalids bore quite as noble a part in the proceedings as did that hard-drinking, swashbuckling, gambler Bassompierre, the boon companion of Henri de Navarre and successful lover of that spiteful enemy of the hero of Ivry, Louise Marguerite de Guise, Princesse de Conti.

Fortunately for Louis d'Enghien, there were other soldiers under him in the army given into his charge more experienced and more capable than was the newly created Maréchal, L'Hospital. One of these, although small in stature, was the really great Gassion, another was Sirot. Both of these had learned many lessons in warfare in the wars under Gustavus Adolphus. The former, who hailed from Gascony, had been the first Frenchman to fly to the standard of the noble Swede upon his landing in Germany. He took with him a hundred Frenchmen who never disgraced their leader, and became himself one of the most trustworthy followers of the Giant of the North. Sirot was a Burgundian, a brave soldier, but a boaster. He had served in various armies, and one of his boasts was that he had been engaged in personal combat with three kings. Of Gustavus he declared that when fighting against him upon one occasion they exchanged pistol shots, with a result that he put a ball through the King's hat. The Swede making off, Sirot picked up the Monarch's head-dress from the ground, and retained it as a trophy. There are many equally romantic episodes in the life of this brave soldier related by his chronicler the Abbé Arnaud, who had at one time served as a carabineer under Louis XIII.

Although probably the chiefs of the army knew it not, the French King was dead four days before they found

themselves in the neighbourhood of the Spanish army which was besieging Rocroy, a small town in the Ardennes. The last thoughts of the dying Louis were, however, with them. His last words were, "They are fighting hand to hand. Enghien wins—bring me my pistols!"

Rocroy was in a plain, surrounded by a wood, and there was no means of arriving at this plain save by marching in file. Slow to move as the Spaniards were known to be, L'Hospital was anxious that the operations should be confined to throwing a reinforcement into the place, for which it was considered there would be time. After having accomplished this useless task of merely leaving more mouths in the town to be fed before an ultimate surrender, the Maréchal urged that the army under Enghien should retire. Not so Gassion and Sirot—they scouted the ideas of their leader's mentor, and Enghien himself being against him, he had to give way.

The Spanish army was commanded by two noble Generals, Don Francisco de Mello and the old Comte de Fontaine. Of these the latter, like the celebrated Prince of Parma before him, was gouty, and had to be carried about on the field of battle in a portable chair. Their forces, like most of the Spanish armies in those days, were of a mixture of nationalities, of whom but a very small contingent were actual Spaniards. The remainder were Walloons, Flemish, Italians, and Germans.

While this large force of mixed nationalities were lazily lounging about their camps around Rocroy on May 18th, 1643, they were suddenly surprised to see French cavalry soldiers riding in file out from the woods on to the plain. Before they could at all grasp the situation, Gassion had led all his advanced guards through the leafy defiles, and had time to form them up and cover the passage of the infantry under Enghien. The artillery followed, and the rest of the horse, ere the Spanish had awakened to the fact that here were no mere reinforcements for the town—here was a whole army in position, and ready to fight them.

They commenced cannonading the unwelcome intruders,

who returned the compliment. Then both sides camped for the night. After dark a deserter from the Spaniards arrived with the news that a large reinforcement was expected next day. This settled the matter of an early attack. Before daybreak Enghien was in the saddle in his cuirass, riding up and down the ranks of the troops, in an excellent humour. He wore white plumes upon his head, like his kinsman Henri de Navarre. As the Spaniards showed no signs of moving, the French commenced to advance, Gassion and the Duc leading the troops on the right, L'Hospital those on the left wing. A thousand musketeers hidden behind a screen of trees made it hot work for Gassion and his cavalry, firing upon his flank. He charged and cut them all to pieces, then charged upon the enemy's cavalry drawn up behind the trees. These he drove gallantly back before him; but when the Duc d'Enghien wished to pursue, Gassion restrained him and rallied the troops.

Meanwhile, all went wrong on the left flank. L'Hospital was wounded, his next in command taken prisoner, the cannon likewise taken. Now the Duc d'Enghien sent orders to Sirot, posted with the reserve, to advance and help L'Hospital. Sirot, however, refused to budge. To advance, he would have had to do so in file through the trees; he preferred to wait. The left wing was broken and falling back in disorder, when again a message came to Sirot by a staff officer of the defeated wing.

"Sir," he cries, "we are defeated. The battle is lost: let us retire."

"Nothing is lost," replies the Burgundian, "for Sirot remains!"

Directly afterwards the enemy appeared, and they it was who were now at a disadvantage. While Sirot, never moving an inch, killed them as they came on, Gassion and the cavalry, having come through the whole of the foreign troops of the Spanish army, attacked them in the rear. Thus were the conquerors of the left wing defeated in turn.

Now a combined attack was made upon the splendid

infantry of real Spaniards, who nobly stood their ground in a square or phalanx, looking, as they grimly faced the foe, like a great hedgehog bristling with spears. At length a breach was made in one flank by the artillery. From all sides now the gallant French infantry charged. A furious hand-to-hand fight took place, and at length Don Francisco de Mello fled from the seething and disorganised mass, following a number of his flying men. But the gouty old Comte de Fontaine was carried about in his chair, chopping away like a demon with his ensanguined sword. When his bearers had been cut down, he sat in his chair, and continued the combat until he fell, never to rise again.

The battle of Rocroy is won! terrible has been the slaughter of the foe; grandly have the infantry borne themselves! For the first time in French history the honours of the day have rested chiefly with them, so stubbornly have they fought.

The battle of Rocroy is the making of the French infantry soldier. Before that encounter, it is upon the cavalry that the chief reliance of France has ever been placed. The battle of Rocroy is won, and who is the real winner? Not the Duc d'Enghien, not the gallant Gassion, not the boasting Sirot. The real winner at the battle of Rocroy is Mazarin, for it places him in the seat of a king upon the throne of France!

CHAPTER II

The Garden of Julius Mazarino

1643 AND LATER

THERE has always been a necessity in France—that of a popular hero to be worshipped as a god for a time, until there comes the turn of the next man, when god No. 1 is deposed and god No. 2 has his innings. This necessity was filled, after the victory of Rocroy, by the Duc d'Enghien, while King Mazarin reaped the benefits. The crowd shouted and applauded the hero ; the Cardinal began stretching out his grasping hand to the money-bags of the unwary shouters. Nor was it long before, through his tool Fouquet, the little black Minister of Finance, Julius Mazarino, commenced to draw in enormous sums for his own benefit from the impoverished people of France. The great difference between Cardinal Richelieu and his successor lay in this : when the former extracted every farthing that he could, by means of his Intendants, it was for the benefit of the State that the money was employed. The aggrandisement of France, the balance of power in Europe, were the objects aimed at by him ; whereas when Marazin, by every unlawful means, ground down the starving poor, it was to fill his own coffers, to give enormous dowries to the seven beautiful nieces for whom he secured the grandest matches in Europe. The career of Mazarin was from the outset that of a cheat, a filcher of the goods of others ; he was, moreover, a gambler, who cheated at cards, a believer in luck, and in backing his luck by any means in his power. Thus assisted, his luck did not desert him, so that before his death, in the time of

the Fronde, we find him raising an army at his own personal expense wherewith to fight against Condé, while upon his death, in March, 1661, as a result of his thefts, he died the richest man in Europe.

Although a Cardinal, there is nothing to prove that Mazarin had ever been received in Holy Orders. As Julius Mazarino, we find him commencing his career as a young officer in the army of the Pope. His first appearance, so far as history is concerned, was as the *Abate* Mazarino upon the field of battle in Piedmont. Waving a white handkerchief before the armies of the three Marshals, Schomberg, d'Effiat, and the traitor Marillac, he cried "Peace! Peace!" In his pocket was the result of the treachery of the two Queens and their tool Father Joseph to Richelieu and to France, the Treaty of Ratisbon, signed without the knowledge and in direct opposition to the policy of Louis XIII. upon his sick-bed, and of his Minister the Great Cardinal. Thus the Maréchal Marillac threw down his arms, for he was a party to the plot, the Spaniards were saved from certain destruction, the cause of France was lost. For how could the two loyal commanders continue the battle when a third of the army, hearing that joyful cry of "Peace!" were fraternising with the enemy?

The treachery to France which, in October, 1630, thus first associated the young Italian with Anne of Austria, was to prove the commencement of an association which lasted for thirty years. Throughout that long period—a generation—the treachery of these two foreigners—the Spanish Queen, the Italian adventurer—continued with unvarying sequence. It was not long after Ratisbon that the handsome young peace-maker became personally known to his future mistress, a mistress whom he ruled rather than was ruled by.

Richelieu himself it was who incurred the responsibility of first bringing Mazarin to notice at the French Court, when in the year 1631 he presented the man, who had already become his pupil in statecraft, to the Queen with the significant words that he was very like the Duke of

From the picture by Sir Anthony Vandyck.

MONSIEUR,
Son of Henry IV. and Marie de Médicis.

Buckingham. The hint was sufficient. Acting upon the Persian proverb which says, "To the wise a hint is enough," Anne of Austria showed excessive amiability to Mazarin from the very first, while eight years later, upon his definitely establishing himself in France, the Queen accorded to him a degree of intimacy amounting to scandal. It was, however, according to Tallemant, in the very year of Richelieu's death that Mazarin became the actual master of the Queen, when, in the spring of 1642, he saved her by his good advice from a very actual danger.

A plot was on foot, of which she was cognisant, for the murder of Richelieu at Lyons. There were concerned in it the King's brother Gaston d'Orléans, the Duc de Bouillon, Cinq Mars, the young favourite of the King, and du Thou, the Court librarian. The better to secure the power when the Minister should have been murdered, a secret alliance had been made with Spain, by which she promised troops to Gaston.

Richelieu had an inkling of what was going on, but required proofs to convince the King. Then it was that Mazarin gave to Anne the counsel that proved her own safety and left her her children, who would have been, as already threatened, most certainly removed from her custody. Acting upon this advice, Monglat tells us, she sent a sure man to the Cardinal and threw herself upon his mercy, while giving him, what he wanted, exact particulars of the Spanish treaty. The fatal results to some of the Queen's confederates of this treachery upon her part is well known; but had she not followed the course suggested by Mazarin, the position of danger wherein she would have found herself would have been as great as she deserved. It is probable that, doomed men as practically both he and the King already were, Richelieu would, before dying, have made it absolutely impossible for Anne of Austria ever to have done any more harm. Had the King had but an inkling of her share in this conspiracy, after so many others, he would

have taken effective measures to prevent the spouse whom he hated and despised from ever becoming Regent of France.

As it was, the Cardinal never disclosed the Queen's part in the matter; and how she became Queen Regent upon the death of Louis a year later we know. Although the Queen's gratitude to Mazarin was not unmixed with passionate love, as is shown by her letters, his unpopularity in France as a foreign adventurer of low origin was so great that she well knew the risks which she ran in bestowing upon him the highest position in the State. The nobility at large, who resented Beaufort, detested the new Cardinal; the people hated him, if for no other reason because he could not speak French without a strong Italian accent. His *baragouinage*—the broad mouthing of the language—was a cause of frequent and spiteful merriment, and one that was never forgotten since, despite his defects, Mazarin was by no means averse to publicly addressing the Parliament of Paris.* It was evident, therefore, when, by his indiscretion and that of his mistress, the hope of the house of Vendôme had lost his high position, and the Italian had floated to the uppermost place, that if he would remain at the top of the tree, the trunk which supported him would require to be very strongly stayed. Could he secure that support and keep it, he would have nothing to fear from either the weak Bishop of Beauvais or any other competitor for the Royal favour. Without that extraneous support, Anne herself could not for long have maintained

* Note.—The Parliament of Paris was instituted in the time of St. Louis (Louis IX.), 1226–1270, as a high court of justice. It consisted at first solely of great nobles who could judge their peers, but later lawyers, ecclesiastics, and only a few nobles formed the court. Eventually, the Parliament of Paris was composed of lawyers only, who were known as "men of the robe." A judicial tribunal, it also registered all royal edicts and wills, its registration being necessary to give them full force of law. There were also twelve provincial Parliaments, but that of Paris was supreme.

her favourite during the minority of Louis XIV., whether he were actually her husband or merely her lover.

Realising this, and also that there were certain objectionable plants likely to interfere with the roots of his tree, Mazarin soon set about arranging his garden. The iron supports were supplied by the house of Condé, whose avarice and ambition were gratified to the top of their bent, and the plants whose flowers might, by their brilliance, contrast unfavourably with the shady foliage of the branches whereon he wished to remain perched, were quickly eradicated with a hoe.

The first of these to be rooted up was the very capable Marquis de Châteauneuf. He, an old *amie de cœur* of the Queen, had for long been imprisoned by Richelieu, chiefly on account of the manner in which, in 1631, he had shown his ingratitude to the Great Cardinal, and openly supplanted the then love-sick minister in the good graces of the handsome Anne. It seemed to that queen of intrigue, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, that now, if ever, had come the time for rewarding one who had suffered so much for her mistress, by at least a seat in the Ministry. Anne herself was of a similar opinion. The Italian, however, while too polite to hoe up himself this particularly pleasant shrub, put the handle of the implement into other and fairer hands than his own. The Princesse de Condé—once the beautiful Charlotte de Montmorency—could not possibly bear to see the Royal parterre disfigured by the poison plant which had assisted in removing the head of her unhappy brother. With a rake she dragged it off the grass-plot. Châteauneuf was thrown over the garden wall!

Others there were to follow, and with characteristic ingratitude Bouthillier was thrown over by the Queen. There yet remained Chavigny. Whether the son of Richelieu or no, the Comte Léon de Chavigny had, as the right-hand man of the Great Cardinal, ever assisted this benefactor of Julius Mazarino. Louis XIII. had, by his will, appointed him both Minister of State and Member of the Council of Regency. He, at all events, it would

have been imagined, would have been retained to flourish in the shadow of the Mazarin tree. Gloomy, self-concentrated, talented, cruel, determined, surely here was the very ivy to flourish round the trunk, to give it additional strength rather than to damage the bark!

Unfortunately, the Duchesse de Chevreuse, whose advice on gardening matters was this time considered sound, was, for some reason best known to herself, of opinion that this climbing parasite was more likely to prove of the nature of the deadly nightshade. The tender heart of the head botanist was in despair; but under the circumstances, what was there to be done? With an axe lying handy, the creeper which for so long had proved a support to his predecessor, was severed by Gardener Mazarin at the root.

The tree was now secure; the garden, if a little bare, all smiling and serene. With a little luck it would remain so for long years to come. "The luck"—thought Gardener Mazarin—"will surely come if only I manure sufficiently strongly the overshadowing and protecting tree of Condé." How he manured it and how the luck continued we will, without any further references to Italian methods of horticulture, now proceed to explain.

When the nobles who objected to the foreigner being placed at the head of affairs ventured to make a suggestion to that effect to the Queen, Anne replied that Mazarin was *au courant* of the affairs of the country, and therefore not dangerous; further, that he was amusing; and lastly, that he was, above all, disinterested. Being *au courant*, the Cardinal apparently thought it a matter of high policy to make her Majesty equally so. The way in which, to complete her education in statecraft, he commenced to give the Queen long private lessons nightly, soon aroused the indignation of the Court. He, however, was the master, his will had to be obeyed. Although the master, it was his mastery over the Queen which alone made him the master over others who despised his petty meannesses, his fits of insolence followed by humble apologies. He shared

in a singular way with Henri de Guise the disagreeable and dangerous habit of stirring up discord among friends by a biting word to one side or the other, which custom being understood, by no means increased his popularity. It was impossible for Mazarin to disguise the poltroonery of his nature, which, being thoroughly well seen through, enabled at times those bold enough openly to tackle and browbeat him to do so with success. There is a story to this effect about M. de Miossens, to whom he had promised the grade of Maréchal de France. Probably because he had not been paid for the post, the Cardinal withheld the nomination. This did not suit de Miossens, who was a man of fiery temper. Meeting the Cardinal upon the Pont-Neuf, he threatened the Minister with his stick, saying that he would administer a sound thrashing unless the appointment were immediately made. "Now that is what I call talking," said the Cardinal; "I see that you mean it." He went home and signed the paper which before night had transformed de Miossens into the Maréchal d'Albret.

With his gambler's nature and belief in luck, all that succeeded was what Mazarin believed in. Neither bravery nor ability reckoned in his selection of a man. "Is he lucky?" was the question which he always used to ask, or, as he pronounced it in his Italian-French, *Est-il houroux* (*heureux*)*?*

The luckiest man of the day being the young Duc d'Enghien, who, not long after Rocroy had developed, by his father's death, into the Prince de Condé, it naturally became the anxious care of the Minister to keep him so. For this every nerve was strained, every one else neglected. A bloody battle every year and a victorious one was required to keep up the popularity of the young General, to maintain the Cardinal who hung on by his laced coat-tails.

There was another General who had already made a mark, one older than Condé, the Vicomte de Turenne, brother of the Duc de Bouillon. The time had not, how-

ever, come to fall back upon the solid, stolid, half-Dutch attributes of Turenne. That was to come later, and then it may rather be said that Turenne himself offered—insisted upon giving—the required support to save a frightened Cardinal and a frightened Queen from Condé himself. In the meantime, however, and for five years to come, it was the youthful, flashy brilliancy, the unconquerable tenacity, the determined resolution upon the field of blood of the younger man that was more calculated to give the requisite stage-setting to the battles of the day, if the people were to be dazzled into submission to the will of the Minister who employed him.

Accordingly the army which, once a year, for a time, was provisioned and supplied with proper warlike material, was that of Condé. The army did not receive these attentions during the rest of the year, while serving under other and less fortunate commanders ; it had to wait for the arrival of the hero, for whom it was to have the honour of using up its material of flesh and blood as his reckless moods might suggest. But not alone was it to enjoy such signal favour, for every May or June, leaving the Court, the hero would bring an army of reinforcements—some ten thousand men, a crowd of the young nobility—to help to swell his triumph.

The methods of warfare of *The Great Condé*—heaven save the mark !—were as crude as those of some savage chieftain of the palæolithic age, or indeed cruder. For it is probable that the warriors of the stone age had, at all events, sense enough to attempt to dodge the well-aimed flints of their prehistoric antagonists. It is certainly more than likely that the stone-hatcheted ancestor of the Goth or Gaul had sense enough, upon finding his enemy strongly posted on a hill behind a wall, to go round another way and fall upon him from behind. Not so le Grand Condé. Honour would not allow of the military art of circumlocution being employed by any troops under his command. Straight must they go, and by the most difficult road ! If there were palisades in front, so much the better : there were plenty

of men—let them die against those palisades! When the first lot were killed, were there not more to send? How those strategists, old soldiers of the Thirty Years' War, Turenne and the Bavarian General, Mercy, must have despised his methods! The duty of the former it was, however, to obey; as for the latter, we can imagine him in command of the army that Condé was attacking at Freibourg, smiling serenely behind his *abattis* upon the slopes of the Black Mountains. For three days in succession, in August, 1644, Condé hurled himself blindly upon position after position. Each evening Mercy retired to a point better prepared for defence than the preceding one. One evening, after charging seven times in succession against barricades of wood and sharpened stakes, when nearly all his friends had been killed, Condé was falling back alone. Seeing a young noble who was not yet dead, he remarked cavalierly to his wounded comrade, "Oh! that's nothing; we'll do it better next time!" But the next was no better. Eventually, being short of provisions, Mercy quietly retired his forces by such a strategic route that Condé, following, could only do so in file through the woods. Mercy charged the so-called pursuers with fury, and took several French flags.

This series of battles, in which Condé had lost far more men than his adversary, was described as the victory of Freibourg. A moral success before Europe it certainly was. Such cruel, cold, and stubborn courage in the young commander, such docile obedience in the soldier when called upon time after time to attempt impossibilities, had never yet been seen. It raised France, it raised the French soldier; the German towns of the Rhine were terrified before such bloodthirsty tenacity. They opened their gates to Condé—Mayence yielded without a struggle. It mattered not that in Catalonia, in Italy, all was going badly for the arms of France. Mazarin only talked about Freibourg. That success made his seat upon the throne in the Queen's boudoir secure for a year.

Exactly a year later, in August, 1645, another success of

the same description, that of Nordlingen, was engineered, to secure the Cardinal's seat for another twelve months. The Vicomte de Turenne had been left for long with a dwindling army, when Condé came with his yearly reinforcements to take the command over his senior's head. Mercy, strongly posted, first behind a marsh, afterwards on a hill, inflicted a crushing defeat upon Condé himself and his right wing. The French cavalry were driven back six miles in headlong confusion. Turenne, however, with the German contingent on the left, had held firm. The young Condé, with his accustomed courage, placed himself at the head of the Vicomte's unbroken troops and gallantly led them to the charge. Fortunately in this charge Mercy was killed. Four thousand men were killed on both sides, but, as the enemy retired—although unmolested, and after destroying nearly all the French cannon—this was claimed by Anne of Austria and Mazarin as another victory for the Prince.

The battle of Lens was another in which Condé's bulldog courage was conspicuous, but it would be monotonous to describe it. Other successes there were for this lucky commander, in Flanders, where he replaced the Duc d'Orléans at the fortunate moment. Here the valiant Gassion took for him the town of Furnes and assisted him in the capture of Dunkirk, of which, however, Condé took all the credit. The loyal conduct of that old dog of war Gassion was all the more commendable from the fact that shortly before he had been grossly insulted by his commander before the whole army. Gassion having ventured to make a very wise suggestion, the Prince de Condé shouted out to him in a fury, "I am your General, I will teach you to obey. I know more than you do; I will make you obey like the last-joined recruit." This gallant soldier was killed in the following year, after a career spent in the field. The lists of love never had any charms for Gassion, whose sole adoration was for Gustavus Adolphus. When asked why he did not marry, he replied simply, "I do not esteem my life sufficiently to wish to

give it to any one." And yet he may, after all, have been truly said to have given his life for Mazarin, since for more than four years it had been his skill, his devotion, which, more than the blind ferocity of Condé, had served to keep the Cardinal at the top of the tree.

CHAPTER III

A Picture of the Fronde

1648—1652

Who would have dreamed that Cardinal Mazarin, once a young officer in the service of the Pope, would ever have dared to raise a sacrilegious hand against the Sovereign Pontiff? Surely not his great predecessor Richelieu, who once made war upon the Pope and took from him his forts in La Valteline, who once wrote also to his apt pupil in the art of governing despotically in such sarcastic terms on the subject of his excessive deference to the papal authority. That was at the time when the great Cardinal, himself exalting the tenets of Gallicanism above the autocracy of the papal chair, had serious thoughts of establishing himself as an independent patriarch in France and absolutely ignoring the Pontifical rule. The result had been a compromise, by which, as he usually did, Richelieu had gained more than half the points for which he contended, including the Cardinal's hat for Mazarin. Not much more than five years later we find, however, to our astonishment, that his successor, now no longer timorous, dares also to throw down the gauntlet to Rome in the person of Pope Innocent X.

The reason for which Cardinal Mazarin for once saw fit to raise an army and likewise a fleet which were not intended for the glorification of young Condé, was no weighty matter of state. No, indeed! it was a far

more personal affair which impelled the sturdy champion of the cause of self-aggrandisement to threaten the Pontiff and make him quake in his tiara and keys. For was there not in existence a monk who, if obscure and stupid, indeed, almost idiotic, was the brother of the potentate who held in his hands the present power of the Queen Regent, the future destinies of the boy-King? And had not His Holiness been so blind to his own evident duty of respect to such a potentate as to refuse to this monastic brother the Cardinal's hat? Clearly it was a case which demanded that such of the scanty treasure of France as did not yet happen to have been appropriated for other purposes should be devoted to a holy war!

The war which was to make Rome tremble, the war for the glory of the Mazarini, although a very costly affair, was not such a success as had been anticipated. Although a large fleet was collected at Toulon and an army put on board, the attack upon the Spaniards, as near as conveniently might be to Rome, proved in fact a ghastly failure. It resembled upon a small scale the adventure of the Spanish Armada. The wind played sad pranks with the ships, the Admiral—Brézé—brother-in-law of Condé, was killed, the army of Julius Mazarino had to escape, as best it could, through the mountains of Tuscany. For all that, the hat was obtained, upon the declaration of the disappointed head of the Mazarin clan that he would not grudge double the money, that he intended to have another try for the crimson *biretta*. Seeing that he was, in fact, commencing once more to invade the manufactory of cardinalian headgear, the lady at that time at the head of the papal establishment, by name the Signora Olympia, flung his brother the hat, and the anti-papal crusade was ended. This brother was subsequently enabled to display his incapacity as ruler in Catalonia.

In the meantime, it is not to be imagined that a Condé could see an opportunity for grasping at money or place, and let it slip. The dead admiral being the brother of his wife, the admiralty and its emoluments clearly

reverted to Louis de Condé. At least, so said the Prince. Mazarin thought otherwise, and, since there was no other person upon whom he dared to bestow the post with its emoluments, he bestowed it upon the Queen. Storming and raging, Condé declared that even if upon a Queen, no lady would look well in a naval uniform. Her Majesty was compelled to resign her rank in the sea forces, but in revenge, Mazarin played the dissatisfied young man a trick under guise of a benefit. Owing to mismanagement in Catalonia, the Catalans, who once had cried to Louis XIII. for French government, had now risen against France. Harcourt, the General sent for their suppression, came to dire disaster before the mountain fortress of Lerida, a place which had more than once foiled the arms of France. To what greater glory, suggested Mazarin, could Condé aspire than to that of storming the almost inaccessible rock? Gaily he undertook the adventure, and opened the siege by a ball under the walls. To this the brave and courtly Commandant of Lerida contributed the refreshments, in the shape of oranges and ices, which he despatched as soon as he heard the violins striking up the notes for the opening dance. His attentions, however, did not stop there, and so pressing did they become that, upon the approach of the hot weather—and the army of Aragon—Condé had to retire in very ill humour. This he wreaked barbarously upon every small town upon his line of retreat, as unfortunately he had no opportunity of revenging himself upon the Cardinal, whose trick he understood when too late.

The considerable advantage gained by Spain in this campaign helped considerably to bring about the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the horrors of the Thirty Years' War. By this treaty, France retained the conquests which had been made in Alsace by Richelieu, but otherwise she gained little or nothing. Notwithstanding this, the war ended with increased prestige to Cardinal Mazarin, for had he not extended the boundaries of His Majesty Louis XIV., the infant King of France?

From a contemporary print.

LE GRAND CONDÉ.

In the glory of the peace, the erstwhile hero, Condé, was not allowed to share upon equal terms with the Cardinal, for the people could not forgive him his Spanish reverses. This is exemplified by an amusing instance. One night at a theatre, when the Prince was present, a discontented and impertinent fellow hissed and whistled. Upon his arrest being attempted, while escaping in the crowd, he insultingly shouted out as a parting shot, "You can't take me—I am Lerida!" The audience laughed, but Condé became pale with fury; had he but been able he would have slaughtered the crowd. He did not forget the insult, and avenged it in the streets of Paris during the stormy days of the Fronde.

If the Peace of Westphalia, signed in 1648, brought with it rest to poor tired Europe, upon whose once smiling plains and valleys a now solemn silence reigned over hundreds of thousands of blackened and devastated homesteads, it can scarcely be said to have brought peace to France. It can, on the contrary, be said to have been but the principal cause conducing to the continued misery of that unhappy country. For, by leaving the external outlook quiet, it was evident that more time was now available for the Queen Regent and her Minister to devote to the internal affairs of the kingdom. They were not forgotten, those internal affairs, by any means; unfortunately, those words "the internal affairs of France," as understood by the Italian traitor Mazarin, had by no means the same signification as they had in the mouth of the good King Henry of Navarre and of his indefatigable Minister Sully.

No question was there now of endeavouring so to arrange matters throughout the kingdom that every peasant should have "a fowl in the pot for his Sunday's dinner." Far from it! Rather was it now a question of how to take from the peasant the last egg which might produce a fowl, the last feather which he could stuff into a mattress, the last shred of clothing, the last piece of black bread which was hidden behind the rafters. This grasping exaction it was which led up to the abortive revolution, or rather the

series of abortive revolutions, known by the name of the Fronde.

How the word *fronde*, signifying a sling, came to be applied to the revolutionary upheaval commenced in 1648 by the Parliament of Paris, was as follows.

The street boys of Paris were in the habit of annoying and injuring the watchmen by hurling stones at them with slings. Despite strong repressive measures, it was found impossible for the forces of law and order to put down this objectionable practice. When Mazarin first attempted to suppress the parliamentary opposition to his arbitrary measures, one of the *conseillers* declared in a speech that as well might the watchmen endeavour to reduce to submission those street *gamins* the *frondeurs*. The word caught on—the revolution became La Fronde from that day.

It may be said, *ab initio*, that the Fronde was a moral revolution against Mazarin; it was, at all events in its commencement, the war of the honest against the dishonest.

To learn what it developed into, the horrible condition of affairs to which its four years of civil war, the exactions of the Minister, the pillage of the soldiery, reduced the country, we are indebted to the researches of M. Feillet, a savant of the last century. This painstaking investigator was successful in unearthing, from the records of the Bibliothèque, the reports of the missionaries sent by the good Abbé Vincent de Paul to attempt to alleviate the universal distress in the environs of Paris and in the provinces.

For this purpose, as the wealthy Church kept her bulging purse-strings tightly closed, the good father was compelled to rely upon such subscriptions as he could obtain from charitable persons, chiefly ladies. The amount, however, realised from the sale of all sorts of extraordinary gifts, including many lanterns and quantities of rosaries, was so small that, in the province of Picardy, all that Saint Vincent de Paul could give for the relief of the starving

poor amounted to *three and a half sous per head per month!* The worthy missionaries' generosity in the distribution of this charity was tempered with religious fervour. Any starving Lutheran, Calvinist, or Anglican found himself under the necessity of abjuring his faith before he was entitled to receive his soup made of herbs, or his black bread. Let us now glance at the condition in which the missionaries found the country. Here are their own words:

"No tongue can express, no pen can describe, no ear can understand what we saw at Reims, at Rethel, and at Châlons. Everywhere famine and death, bodies lying unburied. Those who remain pick up in the fields scraps of rotting hay, make of it a bread of mud. Their faces are black; they are no longer men but phantoms. The war has placed all on an equality; the nobility, in the straw, dares not to beg, and dies. They eat lizards, dogs dead for a week. Elsewhere, in Picardy, we meet a flock of five hundred orphans, many less than seven years old. In Lorraine, the famished nuns leave their convent to beg."

Round about Paris, where for five years there had been neither harvest nor vintage, these emissaries of mercy found an equally devastating state of affairs.

"We meet everywhere men so weak that they crawl like lizards on the dung-heaps. They plunge themselves in in the night-time, and by day expose themselves to the sun, already filled and eaten by worms. We find them lying pell-mell with their dead, from whom they have not the strength to extricate themselves. That which we should not dare to relate, had we not seen it, is that they eat their own hands and arms, and die in despair."

While the condition of the people was so awful, so pitiable, it is strange to see the indifferent cruelty of the lords and ladies of the Court, the worse than indifferent cruelty of the commanders of the armies of the opposing factions. During the continuance of the internecine warfare

of the Fronde, at the very time that we are told that, "outside Paris, all was pillaged, pillaged again, ravaged, starved, outraged by the three armies," while the air was loathsome from the dead bodies of men and horses, the great ladies seem to have enjoyed themselves. For, holding their dainty noses with their lace pocket-handkerchiefs, fine ladies used to pick their way over the bodies of the dead to go and feast with the various Generals, while such was the courtly politeness observed between the opposing forces that, when la Grande Mademoiselle went to visit Condé, Turenne used to order his cannon to cease their fire until the Princess of the opposing faction to the Queen had returned to the sheltering walls of Paris.

Despite these *politesses* of gallantry, in nothing did the horrors of the war diminish where the women of less exalted rank were concerned. Everywhere the soldiers waged war, relentless war without mercy, against the sex. Outrage reigned supreme in this dreadful civil war—outrage often followed by death. Pity was unknown!

Angers, Alais, Condom, all had the same awful story to tell. It was sufficient for a woman to be young, it mattered not how young. In the city of Reims there was a beautiful and virtuous maiden, who for ten whole days contrived to elude the brutality of the soldiery. They chased her about from street to street, they pursued the unhappy girl from house to house. Still she would not yield, and repeatedly contrived to escape from the dishonour awaiting her. Furious at length, and out of patience at her obstinacy, the soldiers shot her down. Thus her honour was saved—by death!

While the young women were thus exposed to outrage at the hands of their fellow-countrymen, the army of that madcap, cruel, free lance, the Duc de Lorraine, the army almost his sole possession, with which and by which he lived, added wanton cruelty, and, if we are to believe the Duc himself, cannibalism, to their other crimes. He boasted to fine ladies of the Court that his army never wanted food, since upon occasions of necessity his soldiers ate the dead

or the wounded! At Lagny he allowed them to roast a child in an oven; at another place, for a jest, to flog a man and his wife to death with thorns—just to see which would take the longer in dying. Such were the amusements he delighted in. We are assured by the most excellent authorities that the principal reason which, after the third stage of the Fronde, induced Condé to leave Paris and join himself to the Duc de Lorraine, was that he found more amusement outside Paris in this agreeable life of adventure.

While equally indifferent to suffering, we do not find the Vicomte de Turenne approving of these agreeable games of amusement in the soldier. He objected, he said, to the inordinate gaiety of the army of the Duc de Lorraine, because he found that such levity rendered the soldier less amenable to discipline. Not that he cared for the people, however—far from it! His Memoirs never display the slightest emotion; he traverses country after country redolent of the most awful miseries with never a pitying word. In his pages are nought but the baldest statements of facts, such as: "Not a peasant left living in the villages. A hundred villages traversed without meeting a man alive. In this country not enough left to nourish four men." Such are the simple and unfeeling words in which the Vicomte de Turenne sees fit to put on record a condition of human misery surely poignant enough to have melted a heart of stone. A heart of stone, yes—but not a heart of flesh and blood.

Having drawn a picture of what the Fronde brought to France, let us see what were its opening stages, how it all came about.

Of all the Presidents of the Parliament of Paris, a Parliament composed, as were the provincial parliaments, of the magistracy, men of the robe, there was none so popular as the almost octogenarian Broussel. Good, honest *bourgeois*, he was beloved of the people, whose rights he strove valiantly to uphold. Mazarin, greedy of money about the winter of 1645, attempted to make use of an old edict,

enacted at the time of the invasion of the Emperor Charles V., against extending the city of Paris outside the walls. Since then, an enormous population of poor people had become housed in continually spreading faubourgs. These the Italian determined to tax. Troops were sent to appraise the value of the miserable tenements, and the occupants informed that they must either pay, or their houses would be thrown down and they themselves thrown out into the mud. In support of their miserable cry for mercy, President Barillon—a man who had been most faithful to the Queen in her troubles—pleaded passionately before the compassionate Parliament. That very evening he and four or five others were carried off and sent to the Alpine fortress of Pinerolo, where he died of the cold in a few days' time. Frightened for the time being at this example, the Parliament of Paris registered the edict for the ruin of Paris, and also eighteen other terrible edicts for forced loans—edicts of absolute ruin to thousands.

In the following year, greedy again, Mazarin brought forward a cruel impost upon all food coming into the city, and in endeavouring to force the magistracy to submit to this iniquity, he made use of a terrible threat. This was that, if they would not pass the measure, since the enactment made by Henri IV. assuring to them fixity and heredity in their offices terminated on January 1st, 1648, they should all be deprived of their offices—the sole means of subsistence for themselves and their families. Headed by Broussel, the Parliament for a whole year nobly held out in defence of the poor, although they saw nothing but ruin and starvation before them. Further, by an Act of Union, they joined themselves to the three other chief courts in Paris, and demanded the abolition of illegal taxation, the abolition of the robbing provincial Intendants, and the abolition of arbitrary imprisonment of untried persons. The result of this boldness was that Anne of Austria, furious one day after a good dinner in which she had drunk too much wine, declared that she would have Broussel arrested. Mazarin

timidly agreed, but knew not whom to suggest for an action which would be one of great danger. The Queen, who had just received news of Condé's gallant victory over the Spaniards at Lens, felt emboldened

"I have got the man," she cried, "who will run all risks for his Queen—M. de Comminges!" Mazarin made a grimace of gratification; he hoped that she might send de Comminges to his death.

CHAPTER IV

Intrigues of the Rascally Retz

When, in the autumn of 1648, intoxicated with joy at the sight of the seventy-three Spanish standards which Condé had sent her from Lens, Anne, the Spanish Queen Regent of France, determined upon an act of violence against the Parliament, she was not unsupported.

The crafty Mazarin was, however, frightened at the idea of attempting to arrest the President, especially when he happened to be Broussel, the most popular man in Paris. Even when the Queen declared that she could lay her hands upon a bold knight, who would, she knew, stick at nothing on her behalf, and when the jealous Italian learned that this knight was the handsome de Comminges, he was not convinced. He hated de Comminges, it was true, and would gladly have seen him killed for the part which he had played in the unmaidenly plot of Mesdemoiselles de Hautefort and de Lafayette in 1637, the miracle which had, in 1638, enabled Anne to present Louis XIII. with an heir after twenty-two years of childless marriage.

Nevertheless, Mazarin feared that the odium of the violent and illegal action would fall upon his own head. It was only when he found, as we say, that the Queen was not unsupported that he gave way, for he saw that he could shift the onus of the action and the odium which it would entail upon the shoulders of the Queen's adherent.

This supporter was Léon de Chavigny, whom, since the accession of Anne to the Regency, Mazarin had contrived to leave out in the cold. Faithful to the

violent traditions of the preceding reign, Chavigny warmly espoused the cause of the Queen, and fanned the fire which was raging against the recalcitrant Parliament of Paris in the Royal breast.

The matter then was arranged by the Queen herself. When, after hearing a Te Deum sung, Anne whispered in the ear of her gallant—a real hero of romance—"Go, and may God go with thee," de Comminges was ready and willing; he kissed the Royal hand and went. There were five other chiefs of the Parliament to be arrested, but, taking a carriage, it was to the house of Broussel that he proceeded direct. He took with him a determined soldier, the Maréchal la Meilleraie, and one or two armed attendants.

The carriage was not long in arriving at the house at the Port Saint-Landry, where he found the old man in his slippers surrounded by his family just after dinner.

"M. Broussel, you have got to accompany me at once!"

The young ladies scream and implore; the eldest throws her arms around the handsome de Comminges. The servants add their screams and cries to the general hullabaloo; they rouse the street from the windows by their cries. De Comminges allows no time; he hurries the old man down into his carriage and drives off. "Aux armes!—aux armes!" the cry is raised; "they are carrying off M. Broussel!" In a minute, as by lightning, the populace is aroused at the cry. A rain of missiles falls upon the carriage from the windows. In the Rue des Marmousets a notary's desk falls on the carriage; it is broken to pieces. De Comminges, taking the carriage of a lady who is passing, proceeds on his way with his prisoner, while la Meilleraie himself fires and orders the attendants to fire on the windows, killing two men and a woman. The hail-storm continues; it is doubtful if they will ever get through, when la Meilleraie, shooting down a street porter, clears the road. The carriage gets safely to the Bastille, while there appears fortuitously, to confess the street porter dying on the roadway, that very two-faced personage, Gondi or Retz, the Coadjutor-Archbishop of Paris.

It was no accident which had brought this clever young man in full canonicals upon the road which the carriage would follow! In with the Parliament, in with the Court —a saint in surplice by day, a gallant of dames in hat and plumes by night—there was not much which remained unknown to Retz.

He knew the people would fly to him to assist them, that his own importance in both camps would at once be magnified. He proved correct. The people crowded round the dying porter, weeping and raging, begged Retz to go to the Louvre and implore for the release of Broussel—their beloved M. Broussel. The ambitious Archbishop, who hoped to unite the civil post of Governor of Paris to the clerical one which, from the time of Catherine de Médicis, had been almost hereditary in his family, flew to the Louvre, to the Queen. He expected to find that her Majesty could not do without him, that she would be only too glad of his mediation with the Parliament and the people. Greatly to the surprise of Retz, Anne snapped her fingers at the Archbishop, the Parliament and the people combined. She absolutely refused to liberate old Broussel. Retz left, to pretend to calm the people by day, in reality to stir them to revolt by night. In doing this he had unlimited opportunity through all the *curés* who distributed bread and soup to the starving populace. Through the clergy, therefore, Retz had direct access to the heart of the people—the women as much as the men. Thus the masses wished for Retz to become their Governor; they thought that through him they would become once more kings in Paris, just as the populace had reigned in the city in the time of the League. It was this ambition of the *bourgeoisie* which made them blind to the ill-regulated life led by the prelate, a life truly extraordinary in a wearer of the clerical garb. A duellist, more than a gallant, his personal appearance would hardly have been likely to have recommended Retz to the good graces of the fair sex, had it not been for one redeeming feature. He was very swarthy, had a turned-up nose, and was bandy-legged.

His redeeming feature was his eyes. They sparkled with wit, libertinage and the audacity for which this extraordinary rascal was celebrated in prosecuting his love affairs, an audacity said to have been so convincing that but few resisted his advances. The strength and the weakness of Retz alike lay in his power over the fair sex, his subjection to the flattery of woman's lips. He alternately cajoled and befooled, and was cajoled and befooled.

His relations with the middle-aged Queen exemplified this when, during the second stage of the Fronde, the Archbishop took it into his vainglorious head to make what purported to be serious love to Anne. She gave him back as good as he gave, but, as she had no wish to be made fun of before his mistress, Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, and her mother the intriguing Duchesse, the Queen took care not to go so far as to put herself at a disadvantage. She went, however, far enough to make his interests hers, even kissing Mademoiselle de Chevreuse affectionately after a merited insult which that young lady had received from the populace, instigated by Condé.

We now are, however, in the first stage of the Fronde, and, the Queen having repulsed him, Retz roused the people. While Anne was crying out for the life of Broussel, and with difficulty restrained from hanging him, so Retz says in his Memoirs, by the people of Paris saying that they also could kill prisoners, the populace were arming.

On August 27th, 1648, it was a mistress of Retz, sister of a president and wife of a captain in the *bourgeois* militia, who gave the signal for the rising. She had the town drummer lodged in her house, and sent him off to beat it round the town, after herself with her own fair hands setting the example. In twelve hours only, the enormous reply to the drum-beating of the lady and also that started in another direction by Miron, the Maître des Comptes, was to be seen in the shape of no less than one thousand two hundred barricades in the streets! The Fronde had commenced in earnest!

Already the Parliament had pronounced sentence of

death upon de Comminges, and almost killed the Chancellor when sent from the Court to request them to reverse it. Once more had the fiery Maréchal been obliged to fire his pistols in the crowd and to kill a woman in his efforts, which were successful, to save the Chancellor. The blood of the people was up now, and they commenced to indulge in pillage and other excesses.

Like his prototype Sergius Catalina, the dissipated Roman noble who, with other debauchees, formed a conspiracy to destroy the Senate, Retz had now raised Paris; but, he owns it himself, having raised the revolution, this ecclesiastical Catalina, led by women and with a tail of parish priests and street porters, does not know what to do. He thinks that he will write to Spain; he gets into correspondence with Oliver Cromwell; he decides that before doing anything he will wait for the return of Condé. In this state of indecision he falls under the thrall of Condé's beautiful and ambitious sister the Duchesse de Longueville. This young lady, oblivious of the support which had been given to her by the Queen, against the young Duc de Beaufort and his *chère amie* the Duchesse de Montbazon, when they had brought to light her relations with Chavigny, oblivious, too, of her affection for Chavigny, who is now hand in glove with the Queen, thinks only of her own personal ambition. A victim to her coquetries, Retz makes common cause with her when her first idea is to set up her inefficient younger brother the Prince de Conti as a puppet through whom she is to take the popular lead, while throwing the Great Condé, the apparent ally of Mazarin and the Queen, into the shade. Nothing, however, of any importance can be done until it is seen how the Queen will act.

The Parliament sending her a deputation, which she receives in a passion after her dinner, she screams out to them, "I will give you back your President, your men; I will give them back to you—dead!" Then, like a housemaid in a rage, the Queen Regent slams the door in the face of the deputation, who retire crestfallen, almost to meet

their death at the hands of the angry people behind the barricades, who force the wretched men to return to the furious Queen. She talks this time wildly about stringing up to the window-irons the five or six trembling Parliament men who again seek her presence. Mazarin, Monsieur, with the Princesses, his second wife and his daughter la Grande Mademoiselle, beg and implore Anne to do no such thing, the two Princesses on their knees.

It is now a woman, one who knows what a revolution may mean, who saves the situation. The sister-in-law of Anne, Henrietta Maria, the recently widowed Queen of Charles I., with infinite tact, suggests that what has been the fate of Strafford may very easily be the fate of Mazarin. It is not now the angry woman who yields so much as her trembling lover who takes affairs into his own hands. He causes Anne to sign and seal a letter for the delivery of Broussel, who is sent out of Paris in disguise, to make a triumphal entry in the King's coach on the following morning.

The people wept when old Broussel entered the Parliament—the old President is in tears himself, when in an excess of confidence he rises to propose that the barricades be destroyed. Mazarin is defeated, the Queen is defeated; ten millions of *livres* of taxation are remitted.

But Condé is coming back and the army, that leader and that army which has already bolstered up the Italian usurper for five years. What will happen then? While waiting for the army the Court arms, looking forward with savage anticipation to the massacre of the people.

In the meantime, Mazarin has his scapegoat; he causes Chavigny to be arrested. The Parliament awakens from its dream at this arbitrary act of the Italian, and remembers that other Italian, Concini, the favourite of Marie de Médicis, wife of Henri IV. Have they, then, given themselves over too soon? Have they not been foolish not to listen to the mad howl of the populace: "Let us go for Mazarin!" "Surely," they think, "Retz has only amused us; he has been no real leader. What, too, has been Molé, appointed

President of all the combined Courts of the Act of Union ? A broken reed ! "

Condé returned to Paris on September 22nd. Immediately, yielding to his overbearing nature and his desire to work with Mazarin for the despoiling of his brother Conti, whose wealth would come to himself if Mazarin put him into the Church, he went in a rage to the Parliament. He menaced the Parliament with military brutality ; but, while his avaricious nature had put him on the side of the Court, he had not yet quite made up his mind what to do. It required the double-faced Retz to make the double-faced Prince see his own ambition. Clearly the thing for him to do was to establish himself as military Dictator.

With Retz, by night, Condé now visited Broussel, the President of the Parliament he had that day outraged ; but he found the old man too honest to agree to his plans. Accordingly, the better eventually to place himself at the head of this too-scrupulous revolution, Condé determined at first, to take the part of the Queen. To avoid violence, Mazarin came to terms with the Parliament ; but the articles of the terms signed on October 24th were broken infamously by him less than a fortnight later. Now came the turn of Condé. With his army he surrounded Paris, ravaging as if in an enemy's country.

Oh ! this wonderful maze of a Fronde ! How can its ramifications ever be followed and understood ? The next thing we find is the Queen flying from the capital with her infant son one wintry morning—January 6th —leaving an order for the Parliament to come outside and to hold its meetings at Montargis. The Parliament humbly protested its obedience and submission to the Royal order, but at the same time filled the Hôtel de Ville with arms and ammunition, while Retz and Madame de Longueville determined to make Conti General under her guidance against Condé. Having taken this sapient resolution, Madame de Longueville established herself in the Hôtel de Ville, where her first act as generalissimo was to be brought to bed of a child !

A wonderful collection there were indeed in the arsenal, the Hôtel de Ville—the Provost of the Merchants (a traitor to the cause), the Duchesse de Bouillon (an *intrigante* of the first class), poor old Broussel, several *conseillers* of the Parliament, Madame de Longueville, a wet-nurse—and a child!

The people thought very wisely of turning them all out, of taking the arms, buying Turenne and his army of Germans, which could have been had cheap, and with it of attacking Condé. Now Retz and Condé were evidently frightened of each other, and yet evidently in league. Thus, there was collusion even while there was collision. After three months of ridiculous intrigues and but few battles, Molé and Retz made peace for the Parliament, but without authority to do so, with Condé—that is, with Mazarin. Thus the first phase of the Fronde came to an end with nothing whatever done to secure the liberties of the people. They only had the word of Mazarin!

CHAPTER V

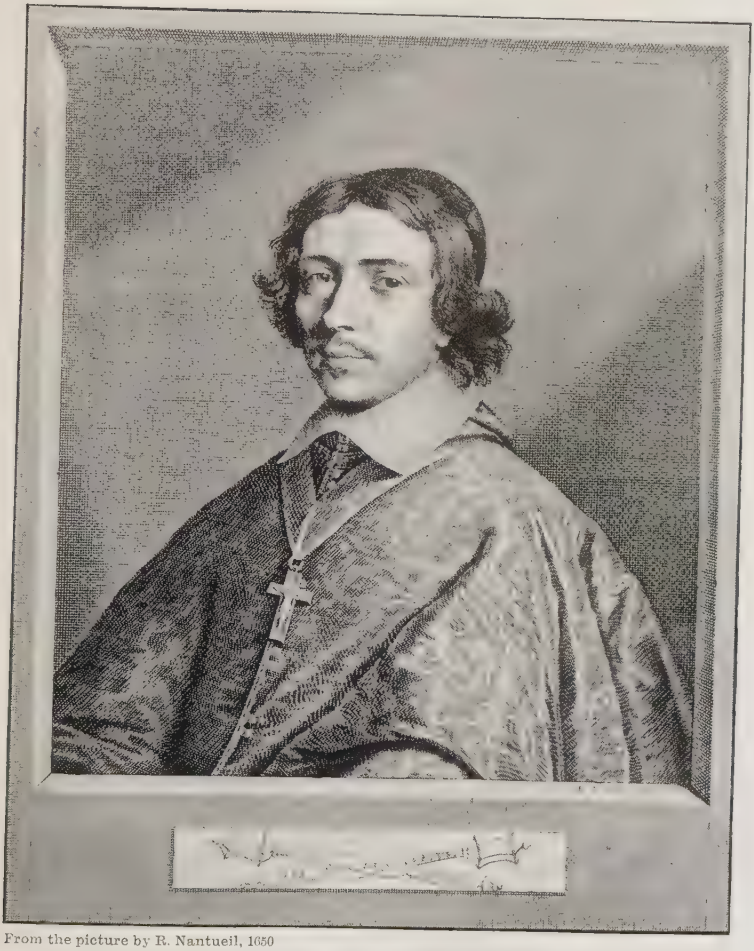
The Retz-Chevreuse Combination

1649—1651

The termination of the first stage of the Fronde, by the signing of Molé, President of the Parliament and associated Courts, upon March 11th, 1649, left the Condé family in a very strong position. Forty years earlier, if they had ten thousand *livres* as an annual income, that was the limit of the family possessions. In 1649 how differently were they placed! Le Grand Condé held the governorships of Burgundy, Le Berri, the Marches of Lorraine, and, in Bourbonnais, a stronghold whence he overlooked four provinces. His brother Conti held Champagne, the husband of the Duchesse de Longueville ruled Normandy.

In addition, all the possessions of the Duc de Montmorency, the King of Languedoc, had come to the head of the family, father of the great Condé, when his wife's brother was beheaded at Toulouse in 1632. As if this were not sufficient, the death of Brézé, brother-in-law of the Great Condé, brought him the admiralty and Saumur, the principal place in Anjou. Thus it will be seen that an enormous part of France had come into the hands of the family.

Notwithstanding his immensely powerful position, the ambitious young Prince could not make up his mind what attitude he wished to assume in the country. That is to say that, while wishing to become its chief, he did not know with which side he would work—the side of the Parliament and the people, or the side of the nobility, who despised them. We leave out the side of the Queen and



From the picture by R. Nantueil, 1650

DE GONDI,
Cardinal de Retz.

Mazarin, as if, as it appeared, Condé desired to make himself Regent, they must evidently go to the wall.

It would seem that Condé had vague ideas of starting a new Fronde of his own; it is probable that he had serious thoughts of establishing a new princely dynasty. For this is what he demanded of Spain later on. Whatever his intentions, he did not go the right way to work, for he contrived to make himself objectionable to everybody of all parties, including Monsieur, whose status of Lieutenant-General he proposed to annex.

Thus, while he and his sister both now gave themselves almost Royal airs, keeping the grandest nobles waiting hours in their antechambers, neither of these young people gained any adherents by their policy of receiving the greatest people with unconcealed yawns.

Condé's undoubted policy, especially after the army of Turenne had been bought by him and Mazarin, would have been to have thrown himself in with the various Parliaments, which were strong thoughout the country. He could thus have made himself irresistible. These Parliaments, all adherent to the Fronde, had given in their submission, by degrees, after the unjustifiable action of Molé and Retz in treating without authority, and especially in treating too soon. Had these betrayers of the Fronde but delayed, had they but bought the army of Turenne, which was for sale cheaper to them than to Mazarin, they had victory assured against Condé and Mazarin. At the moment that Molé signed, the Duc de la Tremouille was about to despatch ten thousand men from Poitou, while the Duc de Longueville was just sending his wife as many more from Normandy to fight for the Fronde against her brother. Now brother and sister were reconciled, and the patched-up peace had left them both so strong that the merest exercise of tact would have left them practical rulers of France.

The way that Condé showed his tact to the Parliaments was exemplified by his threatening the members of that of Aix that he would have them flogged to death! At the same time, Condé was showing his indifference to religion

by offering to Cromwell to become a Protestant on condition of his being given an English army, while also offering his alliance to the Pope if he would help him to be elected King of Poland. Mazarin, this foolish young prince grossly insulted, by pulling his beard and saying, "Adieu, Mars!" when there was a difference of opinion as to a place to be given to Longueville. A day or two later, on a question of precedence as to which of the nobles should be allowed stools to sit in the Royal presence, he insulted the whole Court.

Since, with all this arrogance, Condé took no political moves of any importance, the Queen and Mazarin commenced to hold up their heads, and the Italian Minister to seek powerful alliances. This was done by the importation of his seven beautiful nieces, commonly known as the Mancini. They arrived in a batch, and the first was instantly proposed for the Duc de Mercœur, of the house of Vendôme, while the second was affianced to the Duc d'Epernon, who ruled in Guyenne, where he was universally detested for his tyranny. To carry out this match, a state of civil war became subsequently necessary.

In the meantime, the Minister, of whom the Queen had at his accession naïvely remarked that he was so disinterested, was able to promise these nieces dowries of six hundred thousand *livres* apiece.

While Mazarin was fortifying himself thus, Condé was guilty of a crowning act of folly. He insisted upon forcing upon the Queen a coxcomb named Jarzay, who approached her with burning declarations of love. Anne, to whom, in her now faithful attachment to Mazarin, such follies of youth as love affairs were out of date, sent the young man away. Condé became furious. Seizing Mazarin roughly by the arm, he exclaimed, "I will bring Jarzay back again. I will force the Queen to receive him, whether she like it or no!"

When affairs had arrived at this pitch in the Court, an alliance was made by the Queen with the unstable Retz. As a bribe to this Archbishop and arch-*Frondeur*, she

promised him the Cardinal's hat if he would make common cause against the insolent young Prince trampling all alike so ruthlessly under foot. The bargain was soon made, and Monsieur did not make much difficulty about joining the alliance. By the advice of Retz, it was determined not only to arrest Condé, but also the two recent allies of Retz, the Duchesse de Longueville and the Prince de Conti. To Mazarin must be accorded the credit for the jest by which the Prince de Condé was induced to sign, in blank, the order for the committal of himself and his brother and sister to the Château de Vincennes.

Once more the Queen's faithful de Comminges was in request. Assisted by his uncle, Guitaut, the Captain of the Queen's Guards, he successfully carried out the arrest of the two brothers on the night of January 18th, 1650. The sister, however, by her woman's wit, contrived to escape ; but as Madame de Longueville fled from Paris, she was able to hear the shouts of joy and to witness the bonfires blazing, to testify to the delight of the people at the downfall of one who not long before had been the beloved hero of the populace.

Never had hero done more to assist in his own undoing ; but when once this element of discord was safely under lock and key, with, moreover, the connivance of Retz, it was a mistake to imagine that peace was about to return to France. On the contrary, the disappearance of Condé and Conti to the fastnesses of a dungeon cell was but the signal for the commencement of a new Fronde, which may, for want of a better name, be called the Fronde of the Women.

The first of the women upon the scene was that arch-*intrigante* of the preceding reign, the Duchesse de Chevreuse.* Since the days when she assisted Anne of Austria in the

* Note.—Marie de Rohan—Montbazon was daughter of Hercule, Duc de Montbazon. She first married the Duc de Luynes then Claude de Lorraine, known successively as Prince de Joinville, Duc de Joyeuse and Duc de Chevreuse. She was celebrated for her lightness of behaviour and her talent for intrigue.

affair of her amours with that brilliant fop the Duke of Buckingham, how numberless had been the plots in which she had indulged! Yet, although more than one of these were abominable conspiracies in which the murder of the Cardinal de Richelieu was concerned, the Great Minister had, for the sake of Anne, whom he invariably handled with kid gloves, never been overhard with "la Chevreuse." Thus this queen of gallantry had been allowed to escape time and time again, to edify the Courts of Saint James'·or Brussels with the grace of her sprightly presence.

Since the removal from the scene of Louis XIII. and his Minister, having grown rather rusty in the art of conspiring, having, moreover, grown somewhat old for *affaires de cœur*, the widow of de Luynes and that ornament of the Guise family, the Prince de Joinville, found the time hang heavy upon her hands. It was time, she thought, once more to take a hand in the game, and, since she could no longer conspire against Richelieu, Mazarin would serve her turn equally well. Besides, he was a foreigner! That was quite a sufficient excuse for attempting to serve her down-trodden country, even although for once she might not be acting entirely in accordance with the secret wishes of the Queen.

As usual, the methods of the Duchesse de Chevreuse were not conspicuous for their morality. She threw her daughter into the arms of her ardent adorer, Monseigneur de Retz. Mademoiselle de Chevreuse accordingly shared with her mother the signal honour of becoming one of the *Frondeuses* of the new régime. Retz, with the Chevreuses, *mère et fille*, formed one nucleus of a new revolution—a happy family of three.

Meanwhile, the Queen has also thought fit to become outwardly a *Frondeuse*—for a time. While Mazarin is amusing himself by the distribution of the worldly goods and governments of the Condés to his partisans, Anne actually leaves the son of Broussel, the President whom she wanted to hang, in the important post of Governor of the Bastille. She showers other favours upon the "men

of the robe." Wonder of wonders! the good Queen Anne even allows them the privilege of the superintendence of the *Rentes*. It is sufficient to make every noble in France turn pale with dismay. "What! those who pay the *Rentes* look after them? It is all of a piece with the imprisonment of a prince of the rank of Condé! The Court must be gone quite crazy to side with those low *bourgeois* people." Nevertheless, none of the nobles rise against the innovation; not a man looses his sword in the scabbard on behalf of Condé. No, if Harcourt has now got Normandy, if to L'Hospital has been given Champagne, they are in luck!—it is better to say little, to sit still and do nothing for the hero.

A woman, however, does not agree to this. Madame de Longueville unsheathes the sword and flies to Normandy, where she is repulsed. Now she flies to the Low Countries, and draws in the Vicomte de Turenne to her standard. Together they apply to Spain for help, but at first in vain for either money or men. Meanwhile, those of the old army of Condé do not rise to release their late commander—they forget him in his prison. While deserted by the men of the army, the women of his household did not neglect to run the risks of danger or imprisonment for his sake. He had left his mother and young wife at Chantilly. The latter, at this time aged twenty-two, already had a son seven years old, the Great Condé, when Duc d'Enghien, having married this niece of Cardinal Richelieu at the age of twelve. Mazarin was only too anxious to arrest these ladies at once. Notwithstanding the knowledge of this fact, the mother, the once beautiful Nymph of Diana for whom Henri de Navarre nearly lost his wits with love, came to the lion's den—to Paris. She presented herself before the Parliament and begged for her son upon her knees. Every art of cajolery, flattery, and entreaty of which she was mistress she employed to the men of the robe. The alliance between Court and Parliament, the Retz-Chevreuse combination, was, however, too strong for the mother's prayers to be of any avail.

Now it was that the young wife displayed extraordinary courage. Taking her little boy, she fled, under the protection of an old family adherent, named Lenet, to Bordeaux, to raise Guyenne against Mazarin. To the fine Memoirs of the excellent Lenet we are indebted to much of the history of these days. He tells us how the young Princesse, formerly so neglected by her husband that her uncle's rage was rightly aroused, forgave all his past misconduct. Boldly, with the few young ladies of noble family who had accompanied her, she went to the Parliament of Bordeaux, declaring that it was their duty to raise the standard of revolt against Mazarin, the usurper. There was a great explosion of tenderness in favour of the young lady and her little boy among the people of Guyenne ; for the policy of Mazarin in marrying his niece to the Duc d'Epernon and strengthening the hands of that unpopular governor of the province had raised the hatred not of Guyenne alone, but of the whole south.

For all that, the Parliament was timorous, and did not commit itself, until compelled to do so by a popular revolution, which terrorised its members into compliance, after nearly murdering them. Carried away by this popular manifestation of fury, the Duc de Bouillon, whose wife we have already seen as one of the occupants of the Hôtel de Ville, whence she was treating with Spain for the recovery of the province of Sedan, gave most violent counsels. Backed up by la Rochefoucauld, he advised the Princesse to have a Royal messenger who arrived chopped into little pieces, as an example. Lenet, however, had more sense. He represented that these measures might be considered just a little bit too severe, in case things should go wrong later. In the meantime, Spain gave a little money, not much indeed, and the bold people of Bordeaux armed themselves in the service of the Princesse de Condé.

Mazarin, however, becoming his own General, advanced with the whole of the Royal army against this young girl and her child. As the army of the Cardinal came nearer, the Princesse found that in reality she had little but the

ragamuffin element upon which to rely. And these *sans-culottes* disgusted her by their behaviour. While she allowed them wine without limit, they danced and made merry by night, singing songs of a wanton description concerning Mazarin and the Queen. That was not the worst of it—the people insisted upon this noble young lady and her little boy repeating the words after them. There are—so thought the wife of Condé—some benefits which can be purchased too highly! The assistance of these low people seemed one of them; accordingly she willingly entered into negotiations with the Cardinal, when his army was outside the walls. When he promised her the liberty of her husband, the twenty-two-year-old Amazon laid down her arms and departed in peace with her ladies from the city of Bordeaux.

Cardinal Mazarin, unfortunately for the credulity of this bold Princesse, was not one of those who attached any value to a promise other than that which it might have for himself. When therefore his promises had attained the desired ends and the insurrection been quelled, instead of setting Condé and Conti at liberty, he had them removed from Vincennes to Havre. Having his prisoners more secure than ever, the Italian had other matters to think about. Affairs in Catalonia had been going from bad to worse, while he had thus been thinking of the Condés and of marrying his nieces; an invasion of France by the Spaniards had merely been arrested by the most gallant defence of a wretched little place called Mouzon. Although Mouzon was miserably fortified, the commander of the place, a hero of the name of Marois, kept back the whole Spanish army until the rigour of the season compelled them to retire into winter quarters. The submission of the Princesse de Condé had left Mazarin a free hand. He sent for the army of the north and united it to his army of Guyenne. Now it is that we find Cardinal Mazarin, by means of his own instructions to du Plessis, his general, actually defeating the great Turenne. That celebrated commander, who at the instances of Condé's sister, the Duchesse de Longueville, and with her, had united himself

to Spain, was with the Spanish army in front of Rethel. There it was that he learned that which stood him in good stead later on, when he came to fight against Condé, then in his turn with the Spaniards. This was the unconquerable slowness of movement of the Spaniards. There was so much formality to be gone through, upon all occasions when it was necessary to set the troops in motion, that the opportunity of striking a decisive blow was frequently lost. This was the case at Rethel.

First, du Plessis took the town before the Spaniards could be induced to stir, and then Turenne could scarcely kick them along to the counter-attack. The result was a glorious victory for the Cardinal. His defeat of the great Turenne must certainly stamp him for ever as a great and valiant soldier. His own head, at all events, was turned at his unprecedented success, gained by promises at Bordeaux, by blows at Rethel. He felt that now he was able to treat the Fronde, the Parliamentarians, with disdain; he would be a second Oliver Cromwell—kick them out, teach them who was the master!

Upon his return to Paris, in January, 1651, the Cardinal endeavoured to put this laudable design into immediate execution. The words, however, which he pronounced to the Parliament—words in which he insultingly reminded the *conseillers* of Cromwell and Fairfax—produced a very different effect to that which he had expected. Nor were his plans assisted by the fact that he saw fit to lose his temper with and insult Monsieur, whereupon the Queen, taking the side of her lover—or husband—flew upon Monsieur and, if some chroniclers are to be believed, actually imprinted the marks of her nails all across her brother-in-law's visage. When Monsieur fled, vowing that never again would he set foot *chez cette furie*, he gave the signal for a new turn of the affairs of that wonderful kaleidoscope—La Fronde.

CHAPTER VI

The Great Sleight-of-Hand

1651

ALTHOUGH in the month of January, 1651, Cardinal Mazarin returned to Paris from Rethel with an armful of Spanish flags, he soon had a lesson to learn. This was that the "Fronde of the women," which he set himself at once to browbeat and bully, was by no means the weak establishment that he had imagined it to be.

It was characteristic of his cowardly and ungrateful nature that Julius Mazarino should, so soon as he fancied himself strong enough, always endeavour to kick down the ladder by which he had mounted. In his previous career we have seen him cold-shoulder Bouthillier, Chavigny, and others who had firmly supported him; recently he has imprisoned Condé, upon whose laurels he had for four years been firmly seated; now he would like rudely to dispense in similar manner with those by whose connivance alone he had been sufficiently powerful to imprison the great Condé and his brother.

Had this man possessed the slightest spark of gratitude in his nature, the faintest element of fidelity in his composition to those friends who had proved friends in need, he would not have turned upon the coalition party, headed by the Duchesse de Chevreuse, her daughter, and the lover of the latter, Monseigneur de Retz. Yet who was it that, during the period of his warlike operations, first against the Princesse de Condé, then against Turenne and Spain, had

supported him with the Parliament and the people of Paris ?

Clearly, it was to the two ladies and the squire of dames, the bandy-legged Retz, that he owed the fact that Paris had been kept intact for him during his long absence. To them may be added Monsieur, who had acted loyally with the party to which the Queen had, from sheer necessity, given her seeming adhesion. Returning, Mazarin insults Monsieur, insults the Parliament, while politely informing the *spirituel* Archbishop and his ladies that they can go to the shades of Hades, or any place equally remote from his line of vision.

The conqueror of Turenne soon finds out his mistake ; not a month elapses ere he slips, sinks—drowns himself.

Ungrateful as is the conduct of the victor of Rethel, the means adopted by those he has kicked over disclose a policy which is worse than shady. Never, save in those days of unbridled license, of immorality both political and personal, could men and women have been found to lend themselves to schemes so low for the sake of maintaining place and power.

The plot for the checkmating of the Cardinal was hatched in the chamber of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse ; it was the outcome of the ignoble intrigue between this daughter of the house of Guise and the Coadjutor-Archbishop of Paris. It was a plot for reuniting the two factions, that of Chevreuse and that of Condé. The wonder is that the partisans of Condé—and soon Condé himself—were sufficiently base to lend themselves to its provisions ; at least, it would have been a wonder in any other country than in France—in any other age than that of the Fronde !

The plan was simple. The shame of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse having already proved the strengthening stay of the revolutionary party, her rehabilitation was now to maintain that party upon its pedestal. This was to be arrived at by a marriage, a union between the mistress of Retz and the house of Condé. The girl, whose name had become a byword throughout France, was offered to the

Prince, in his prison, for his brother the Prince de Conti, and the offer was willingly accepted.

However shady the terms of the alliance between the two factions, its results were soon overwhelming. Men of arms, nobles and commoners, quickly rallied to the cause, the Parliament joining, raised its strident cry for a close investigation into the means by which the Minister raised his unlimited supplies of ill-gotten wealth. Soon, finding himself friendless in the city, Mazarin determined upon flight—a flight in which he thought it more prudent, for reasons of personal safety, not to encumber himself with the Queen and the boy-King Louis XIV. Arranging accordingly with Anne that she was to follow him with her twelve-year-old son three days later, Mazarin took his departure from the Palais-Royal, alone, on February 6th, 1651.

Upon the night of the 9th, when, according to the compact, the Queen is about to make good her escape in turn, she finds herself forestalled. For again the women are in the ascendant. Thus, although there is not a man in the city who has wits enough to know what to do in the emergency, the ladies take the necessary measures. They alone prevent the reunion of the unreliable couple. It is the heroine of the unholy alliance, the young Mademoiselle de Chevreuse herself, who awakes to the necessity of closing the still open gates of Paris, while not Monsieur himself, but his wife it is, who dares to sign the order for this being effected.

The gates were closed, the people all on foot, the streets full of armed men in the middle of the night, when, dressed all ready to escape, Anne was warned, not a minute too soon, that escape was impossible, and that the enraged people were thronging to the palace. Hurriedly did she remove all traces of intended flight, hurriedly was the boy-King, already well trained in the art of dissimulation, undressed and put back to bed. When, a minute later, the people of Paris thronged into the Royal bedchamber, what did they find ? They were shown, peacefully sleeping

in a slumber which no shouts, no cries could awaken, a beautiful little boy—the picture of innocence. The good *bourgeois* of Paris were moved almost to tears at the sight of this scene of slumbering Royalty. Cursing those who had kept them from their own repose—with absurd tales of the flight of the Queen with her son—they humbly and on tiptoe retired from the Royal presence.

While this excellent farce was being played within the walls of the Palais-Royal, the escaping Cardinal thought of a move which would enable him to "go one better" than his feminine adversaries, one which might also perchance one day reopen for him those portals which, for the moment, at all events, were hermetically closed. Speeding to Havre, he himself it was who gave the order to set at liberty the two Princes of the Blood Royal, thus earning a claim to their gratitude. Having seen the order carried out, the Italian put as great a distance between himself and Paris as he could conveniently, by proceeding to the Rhine Provinces.

Condé meanwhile returned to Paris to receive a right Royal welcome from the fickle people. All clans and classes received him with open arms, while those of his own party suggested the advisability of his immediately declaring himself Regent, and giving to the Queen and her son a taste of that prison from which he had just escaped. Some of his followers even advised Condé to proclaim himself King of France. Thus then befell another startling change in the pattern of the variegated glasses in the kaleidoscope of La Fronde! There were more to come—and soon.

Two years previously, in 1649, the cunning Cardinal had succeeded in instilling worse than distrust of Retz and also of the young Duc de Beaufort into the mind of Condé. He had distinctly informed him that the pair had concocted a scheme for his assassination, the result having been to prevent any such combination against himself as that which had now taken place. It is not to be imagined that the mind capable of such base insinuations against the coxcomb Retz, who, whatever else he was,

was not a murderer, would not concoct new schemes to wreck the union, to prevent the aggrandisement of Condé. While, therefore, the Prince de Conti was wearing as amiable a face as possible in his meetings with his besmirched young *fiancée*, Mazarin, in his flight, despatched a Parthian dart behind him. The effect of this was soon evident in a bitter quarrel between the nobility and the clergy on the one side, the Parliamentarians on the other.

In the meantime, by the advice of the absent Minister, the Queen was heaping honours upon Condé, and several Governments were restored to him—including Guyenne and Provence. In addition, the Queen showed her independence of Monsieur by choosing as her minister, without reference to him, Chavigny, whom he detested, and who was partial to Condé. This stroke of policy had the required effect. Condé, once more powerful, despised Retz and his crew ; the Parliamentarians, seeing him allied to the Queen, and the apparent alliance between him and the nobles, withdrew all confidence from the hero of Rocroy.

The result was a breach with the Chevreuse ladies, whom the brothers Condé repudiated with outrage. The crowning touch arrived when a paid tool of the brothers publicly insulted these ladies in the streets. Maillard, a cobbler, when the Duchesse and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse were passing, shouted out loudly before all Paris what all Paris knew but too well already.

With flaming cheeks, the ladies cry out for blood to wipe out the outrage. "The blood of the Bourbon," declares Mademoiselle, "is not too much to ask to wash out the insult offered to the blood of Guise!"

The ladies appeared before the Parliament to demand redress. Naturally, the influence of Retz, especially when he had filled the chamber with armed bullies, was sufficient to obtain their public whitewashing without difficulty—and an order for the flogging of Maillard, which Condé could not prevent. Conti was compelled to express regret —to bow his head in passing before the outraged ladies.

Retz, in his Memoirs, remarks naïvely about this

occurrence: "The event might have proved cruel to me—have caused me loss in fortune and reputation." The reputation of a Retz!

His reputation with the Queen, at all events, improved at once. The shifty Anne kissed his young lady upon both cheeks, while the smiling Archbishop stood by, arrayed in hat and plumes like a courtier. The Queen again talked to him about the Cardinal's hat, and at the same time suggested that he should revenge himself upon Condé by assassinating him. To this plot, however, of the Queen, to which Mazarin was privy, Retz, to his credit be it said, would not agree. Even when the agents who were to carry out the killing were sent to him by the blood-thirsty Anne, they could not overcome his repugnance to a cold-blooded murder of the man who had insulted his mistress. These agents were Hocquincourt, du Plessis, and M. de Lyonne.

The last of these three, who was the direct agent of Mazarin, cried shame upon his cowardice. But, when Retz refused to give way, they were too cowardly themselves to act without his authority. For they wanted an assurance from him of the protection of his people of the Fronde against the vengeance of the people of Condé.

It may be wondered how it was that the Queen, who has just been seen showering benefits upon this Prince of the Blood, should so vindictively have urged his murder.

The fact was that he had given her provocation, by publishing details concerning her private life during the preceding reign. The most damning record of the long list of Anne's immoralities was contained in the private journals of the late Cardinal Richelieu. These—to the delight of Paris, which hated the Queen—Condé had placed before the public.

From the well-written Memoirs which Retz left behind him, we are able to learn that, while the Queen was so double-faced towards Condé, the little Archbishop was himself not less double-faced towards the party that he professed to lead. He tells us clearly of his own falseness and hypocrisy, how, the popular prelate and *Frondeur*

by day, he becomes transmogrified into the courtier by night, advising at the Palais-Royal the measures to be taken on the morrow to mollify the effect of the lying nonsense which he himself proposed to utter before the Parliament. In describing his own actions, he gives us a very good picture of the times, of which falseness and treachery were the keynotes from top to bottom.

A short time after the triumph of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse there was an armed encounter in the Court of the Parliamentary Palace, between Retz and his followers and Condé and his gentlemen. Although four thousand blades were suddenly bared, and Retz himself was nearly squeezed to death between a door and the wall, no harm was done. The followers of Condé, who were greatly in the minority, gave way and retired to Saint-Maur. Retz remained the victor; he had successfully asserted his right to *le pas du pavé* over a Prince of the Blood!

The Fronde having now chased Condé from Paris, and left him with no resource save civil war in the provinces or an appeal to Spain, the turn of the great juggler came once more. It was when France was wearied out, dying from fatigue, too physically and morally fatigued to attempt to understand the sleight-of-hand of the scarcely concealed trick, that Mazarin was enabled to make sport of the Fronde which had swept the King of Chantilly so conveniently off his chessboard.

The trick was, at the early age of thirteen, to declare the majority of the young King, his capacity for personal government.

Declaring that "that traitor Mazarin" was never more to be allowed within the precincts of the kingdom, upon September 6th, 1651, thirteen years and one day after his birth, Louis XIV. asserted his intention of reigning himself.

Upon the 8th the plaudits of the crowd were ringing in the ears of the pretty boy upon his smartly caparisoned palfrey. While the boy thanks the Parliament, thanks Monsieur, declares the pardon of Condé, and solemnly

institutes his mother as chief of the Council, he further makes a popular statement. This is that no one, no matter of what party, has been to blame for any of the troubles which have fallen upon the unhappy country of France, save and alone the eternally banished miscreant Mazarin !

At the same moment, upon the Rhine frontier, whence he has planned the coup, the great juggler, the eternally banished miscreant, is leaning back in his *fauteuil* in fits of uncontrollable laughter, while thinking of when and how he intends to return.

With this assertion of Louis XIV. of his right to reign may be considered to have closed the second phase of the revolutionary period.

There are, however, yet more pictures remaining to be seen in the ever-varying kaleidoscope of La Fronde, and the prevailing colour of the shifting glasses is a sanguine red.

CHAPTER VII

La Grande Mademoiselle

1651—1657

THE birth of *les belles lettres* in France may be said to have dated from the days of the Fronde. It was a period when, while half the time was passed in fighting, the other half was occupied in scribbling; moreover, the scribbling was done well. The writers, many of them unknown, who flooded France with the mazarinades—witty pamphlets in song or prose against Mazarin—performed a good service to their country, for they helped to transform the ancient language of Gaul into the modern French, and they made a literature. While already Paul Scarron, the crippled little *abbé*—husband of Françoise d'Aubigné, afterwards to become first mistress, then wife, of Louis XIV.—was scratching away with his biting pen in one corner, in every other direction men were writing their memoirs, writing them in a new and polished French. Of this there was no greater master than the unprincipled Retz. Whatever France may have against the rascally Archbishop for other reasons, she certainly owes to the lover of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse a debt of gratitude for his pretty phrases, his well-turned periods.

The principal peculiarity of the writers of the period, and they were many, is the universal facetiousness of their pen. Gaiety, good humour, mockery, irreligion, *jeux de mots*, the light vivacity of these facetious writers in a time of unmitigated horrors exemplify the character of the people,

to whom all that was low and base, all that was cruel and disgusting, served but as subject for a witty jest.

In writing thus, the language of the day became liquefied, the pen ran swift and easy, warm and luminous. The Fronde left one visible result, the only serious result of its period of upheaval—the new French language. That tongue, which has since been accepted by the diplomacy of the world, for the interchange of thought upon the most stupendous questions relating to diversity of mankind, first became a polished engine, capable of running smoothly and lucidly in the stormy and ridiculous days of the mazarinades.

Later on, we shall see that policy, religion, especially religion, occupy the thoughts of men and women. There was no real religion in the time of Mazarin, no policy save his own—that of amassing an enormous fortune, and of making grand marriages for his nieces. A game of cards, in which he could cheat successfully—for, from the days of his youth, the Italian had a very light hand with the pasteboards—held more importance for him than the burning question of Catholic or Protestant. It had been perhaps better for France if Louis XIV., upon the Cardinal's death, had been of the same opinion. Then would not Europe have been horrified with the terrors of the dragonnades, the wickedness of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

Reverence, whether for the crown or for the Church, was a word unknown in the days when Anne of Austria was Queen Regent—this too although the Queen, as she grew older, made some show of bigotry. That the subsequent idolatry of Royalty was unknown was the fault of the Queen herself, for how could the people worship or even honour a woman the infinite immoralities of whose life—with its base plottings, its projected assassinations—were the theme for the merriment or reproach of every tongue, every pen? Retz himself talks of the Queen as *la bonne Suissesse*, the people called her *Madame Anne*. One of the pamphlets published and very popular during the Fronde was intitulated, "The Curtain of the Queen's Bed."

While allowing the publication of these scandalous mazarinades, the Parliament, in moments of *rapprochement* with the Court, occasionally punished the authors, even with death, when they happened to be obscure and powerless persons—a graceful concession this to what the Advocate-General Talon, upon the Queen's accession to the Regency, pompously called " the secret of the majesty of the mystery of the Empire."

The altar, as we have said, had no more weight than the throne. That for which men would have gone to the stake formerly was relished as witty, *spirituel* in the highest degree, during the Fronde. One of the greatest friends of Retz was the giddy Comte de Brissac, a debauchee and disturber of the peace at night. When he met a religious procession, drawing his sword, Brissac rushed upon the crucifix, exclaiming, " Here is the enemy ! " This irreligious jest was much appreciated. The atheist Beautru, always welcome in the chambers of the devout Anne, was equally impious, if more witty. Meeting a procession, he took off his hat to the crucifix. " What ! " they exclaimed—" you, Beautru ? " " Yes," he replied ; " we are on bowing terms, but we don't speak to each other ! " These two examples, out of many that might be chosen, well serve to illustrate the irreligion of the age.

When, in September, 1651, the boy-King declared his majority, he had not omitted to say that the Prince de Condé was at liberty, if he so pleased, to return to the Court. This prince, who had described himself as tired of " the war of the kitchen utensils," was only too glad to remain in peace in the country, to enjoy the society of his mistress Madame de Châtillon. If there were to be war, the combats that suited him were rather the fierce encounters of the Thirty Years' War, or a roaming life of wild adventure, such as that enjoyed by the Duc de Lorraine with a pack of freebooters in Germany. He, for one, was quite ready to take for a time the distaff from the hands of the women, while the restless, warlike amazons of the day might, if they so pleased, mount once more their caparisoned warhorses and prance

about to their hearts' content. Repose for Condé, however, there was not to be; or, if so, it would be at the price of oblivion, of supersession by his younger brother the hunchbacked Conti. So at least ordained his sister, the Duchesse de Longueville. Nothing being farther from this young beauty's thoughts than quietly returning to the protection of her husband, she determined upon a campaign for the conquest of the south. The ambitious Princesse was by no means inclined to recognise the fact that the great juggler Mazarin had scored the odd trick when the King declared his majority, and the agitators of the Fronde, upon that head if no other, were of the same opinion as herself. When she saw that her brother Condé was sick to death of the whole business, Madame de Longueville and her friends entered into a treaty, which was to make of him a nonentity, whilst elevating Conti to his brother's place. It was, then, jealousy more than ambition which caused the hero of Rocroy to come forth from his retreat, for it had never been any secret that both of the brothers had more of admiration for the *beaux yeux* of their sister than was strictly justified by fraternal affection. In a similar manner, in a time when nothing was forbidden, the delectable spectacle of sister-worship on the part of the brother of the Mancini ladies was freely offered to an admiring public.

Be that as it may, Condé placed his sword at his sister's service and marched off—with her, his brother, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, and others—to conquer the whole of the south of France.

The amazon Princesse was not long to be seated upon her warhorse before there was another amazon in the field. Against the dove-coloured standard upon which Madame de Longueville had emblazoned the arms of her princely house was soon to be seen floating the white flag of Bourbon. For the good Queen Anne, with the support of the Fronde, had launched herself in pursuit of her kinswoman.

Four thousand old soldiers of the Thirty Years' War, under the command of Harcourt, she took with her, also the young King, whose cherubic countenance could but be

expected to have its due effect. And so it was—the friends who had promised aid to Madame de Longueville flocked to the standard, not of the detested Queen, but of the expected deliverer, the heaven-sent infant, Louis XIV.

No help for Condé now but in Spain! A Spanish force came to his aid, but his acceptance of the somewhat exiguous foreign succour cost him more of his friends. For to gain it he had been compelled to deliver up a town in Guyenne into the hands of Spain, whereupon the people of Bordeaux—especially its Parliament—quarrelled with him. That of Paris now declared the Prince a traitor to his country. The Fronde had no other alternative—the declaration was registered in December, 1651.

Now it is that we find the arch-juggler getting tired of his seat in his armchair in the Rhine Provinces. He thinks it time to come out! It is true that he is also a traitor—has been declared by the King himself to be for ever banished from the kingdom of France. But what if he should come to help the King, come to deliver him from the machinations of the wicked Condé? "Ah! yes—that is another matter," says the Fronde, upon receipt of Mazarin's letter. They could not well say anything else, since he does not forget to say that he is coming with a strong army. An army! how raised? Out of the personal pocket-money of the poor man, who the Queen once said was so disinterested! How truly magnificent! how devoted, to spend his few poor sous like this! His bankers' accounts only showed that he had, up to that time, robbed the country of a sum equal to some forty millions of francs of the present day. Learning this, the unpatriotic Fronde declares that, after all, it will be quite wrong for the traitor Mazarin to return to France, even if for the laudable excuse of attacking the traitor Condé. In the meanwhile—he comes.

There is a terrible explosion in the Parliament, the Communes are to be armed. Monsieur is flouted upon mentioning the word "*l'Union*," which reminds the people

of the horrible days of the League. No union now between the Court and the people of the Fronde!

Something must clearly be done to stop this storm in a teacup, to keep the Parliamentary and popular party quiet; accordingly, the long-expected Cardinal's hat is rammed down well over the head of Retz. It covers his mouth—it smothers him! He can now speak no longer; he goes therefore to Notre Dame and sits there quiet. Adieu, Retz! neither Court nor people want anything more of you now—you can go to sleep, if you like!

While Retz goes to sleep, Mazarin is clearly very wide awake after his comfortable nap in his armchair upon the Rhine. He wins as Condé loses. In France the nobles fight for the honour of his alliance—his niece's hands are in request.

The Duc d'Epernon is already his, and another great house is soon gained. The house of Vendôme was descended from Henri IV., whose son César, by Gabrielle d'Estrées, married Mademoiselle de Mercœur, niece of Louise de Lorraine, Queen of Henri III. Yet the scions of this family, descended from both Bourbon and Guise, do not think it beneath them to mix the blood of Henri de Navarre with that of one of the beautiful Mancini. Louis, Duc de Vendôme, the eldest son of César, selects Laura as his wife. The Duc de Beaufort, however, one of this family, is at present fighting for Condé in the north. The Duc de Bouillon, another noble in whose veins runs Royal blood, and who would much like to recover the rule of his principality of Sedan, does not hesitate to ask for another of the lovely girls for his eldest son. This is a match of a most advantageous nature for Mazarin, since by it he will gain the alliance of the Vicomte de Turenne, this famous General being the brother of the Duc de Bouillon.

Condé, who, leaving the south, takes over command of his army of Spaniards in the north from Beaufort, now soon finds himself fighting face to face with his own old lieutenant Turenne. It is only one more shift of the

glasses in the extraordinary kaleidoscope of La Fronde—in which two pieces lying side by side yesterday are constantly separated to-day—only to be reunited on the morrow. Not long since it was, as we saw, this very Turenne who was the mainstay of Madame de Longueville! With a man so unemotional as the Vicomte, it seems probable that it required more solid reasons than the mere marriage of a nephew to the Cardinal's niece to induce him to desert suddenly his old commander's cause. The more so, since we shall find that of all the coloured fragments he is the one that henceforward refuses to be shaken about. We may, perhaps, be able to follow his line of reasoning later. For, from this time forward, among such an unreasoning crowd, Turenne appears to be the one man with a steadfast purpose, which is to support Mazarin.

While, however, the Italian has gained such an efficient ally, Condé is not without a stroke of luck—he has gained one too. The greatest of all the amazons, she who mounts upon a warhorse higher than that of any of the other adventuresses of the day, has thrown in her lot with him. His bosom ally henceforward is to be no young or middle-aged matron, but a maiden. His comrade, abettor, and saviour, throughout the bloody scenes about to ensue, will be she who is known to history as La Grande Mademoiselle.

Mademoiselle was the daughter of Gaston, Duc d'Orléans, the brother of Louis XIII., known as Monsieur. It was upon August 1st, 1625, by the Royal command and at the direct instigation of Richelieu, that Gaston was forced to marry the greatest heiress in France, the daughter of the Duc de Montpensier, a young lady whose hand he had already declined. This was immediately after his unhappy friend Henri de Talleyrand, Prince de Chalais, had been executed for a plot, chiefly instigated by the Queen of Louis XIII., the Spanish Anne of Austria, and Gaston, for the murder of Richelieu. The object in forcing the marriage was that Louis himself might not run the risk of assassination at the hands of his unscrupulous

wife and brother, Anne being suspected of wishing to kill the King and marry Gaston. With Monsieur once married to the great heiress, Richelieu pointed out to Louis, this risk would be averted. Although his young spouse lived but a short time after marriage, this first wife of Gaston left him a daughter before her early decease. This daughter was la Grande Mademoiselle, her title of Mademoiselle being the prerogative of the eldest unmarried daughter of France. Her succession to the enormous wealth of her mother placed her at an early age in a position of great independence. Her character was much stronger than that of her father, but she was by no means free from feminine inclinations. This being so, she wished for marriage, but wished in marrying to secure herself a throne. Having been one of the memoir writers of her time, Mademoiselle has left copious and most interesting records behind her, both of her ambitions and her failures. She, at different times, proposed herself as wife for the Emperor, refused to accept her cousin Charles II. of England during his exile, was willing to accept the ruling Archduke of the Low Countries, expected to become the wife of Louis XIV., and, had he become a widower, would not have been adverse to Condé. Eventually she is supposed to have been secretly married to the Marquis de Lauzun.

Her views regarding her cousin Louis XIV., who was eleven years her junior, had been put into her head by her Spanish aunt, Anne of Austria, during her pregnancy. Being at that time very much afraid that Gaston would, as he threatened to do, contest the legitimacy of the as yet unborn child, about to make its appearance after twenty-two years of marriage, the Queen, by a simple trick, kept her brother-in-law from making his intended outcry. Petting the child Mademoiselle, Anne used to say, "It is thy little husband."

Thus from her earliest days the little girl looked forward to becoming a Queen, an anticipation still unrealised in the year 1652, when Louis XIV. was fourteen years old. Mademoiselle, being at that time twenty-five, and her beauty

not improving as the colour in her cheeks and nose gradually deepened, took it into her imaginative brain that the best way to make the boy-King hurry up and marry her would be to defeat him in the game of war. Condé's wife being sickly, since by assisting him she would earn a claim to his gratitude, who could tell what might not happen? La Princesse de Condé would not be such a bad title *faute de mieux!*

The year 1652 being leap year, this combative young lady signally asserted the time-worn privilege of the sex to take the initiative in such seasons by more potent means than a mere proposal of marriage. She closed the gates of her town of Orléans in the King's face, thus giving to Louis, at the very commencement of his reign, the mortification of having to give way before a woman, and that his own first cousin and subject. Her action was nearly the means of bringing the war to an end at once, for Laporte, the faithful valet of Anne of Austria, has left it on record that Condé all but succeeded in carrying off the boy in his retreat from before the walls of the city, in the defence of which Mademoiselle appeared on horseback with her ladies at the head of her troops!

Shortly after, while he has to leave his army of Spaniards outside the walls of Paris, we find the victor of Rocroy once more within the city. To his dismay, instead of finding himself welcomed by the Fronde, which had but recently declared him a traitor, he found himself compelled to listen to the bitterest reproaches from the men of the robe, for having allied himself with Spain. The Fronde was strong in the city, the *bourgeoisie* were all in arms. Realising that, if they would not have Mazarin, neither would they have him, that to enter the walls with his small force he would be obliged to wade through blood, Condé, that fierce, untamable spirit, had no resource left to him but to sneak back out of the gates, like a whipped cur, with his tail between his legs.

Mazarin was not long in learning this rebuff to the Princes d'Orléans and de Condé, now in alliance, of whom

the former was in Paris with Mademoiselle and looked upon as its head by the Fronde. The king of the jugglers realised the importance he had regained with the King of France and his mother, both present in his camp. Nevertheless, although he had now two armies at his command, one under Turenne and another not far away, under La Ferté, Mazarin was contented for the time to wait. The time of waiting was not badly employed. That prince of free lances, the Duc de Lorraine, having put in an appearance with his army to back up Condé, Julius Mazarino came to terms with him *à l'aimable*. Having been bought off, Lorraine quietly marched away again with his brigands, after doubtless a pleasant visit to his friends the Queen and other ladies of the Court, under the protection of Mazarin. The only people the worse for his visit were the peasantry and inhabitants of the small towns. The country only looked a little barer than before when he had ravaged it—that was all!

Condé, now in desperation, fell back on Paris. He filled the streets with partisans disguised as cobblers and street porters. One day in June, 1652, taking advantage of a dispute which was taking place between various factions of the Frondeurs, in front of the Parliamentary Palace, he gave vent to his bloodthirsty rage and took a characteristic revenge upon the whole lot.

Letting loose his ruffians upon the mixed crowd, they pistolled every one in their road, swept the grand staircase, and knocked many of the *conseillers* on the head. The remainder were dragged and driven pell-mell back into the building, from which they were seeking to escape, and nearly beaten to death with pistol-butts, fists, or butts of muskets. The Parliament came to an end for a time, as a result of this bloody deed of violence, the premeditation of which Mademoiselle explains in her Memoirs. She says that the object of this massacre was that, by terrifying the Parliament and making a desert of its precincts, Condé should put it out of its power to treat with Mazarin, while leaving himself the more powerful to make terms.

We shall before very long, for the same cold-blooded reason, see an even more horrible and deliberately designed massacre, not only planned but carried out by Condé, with the aid of both Monsieur and his charming daughter la Grande Mademoiselle.

CHAPTER VIII

Gaston whistles while Condé kills

1652

No particular service can be done to history by going into the nature of the private vices to which, as Queen Anne herself stated, Cardinal Mazarin was addicted. Nor need we enter into the baseness with which, in his attempt to withdraw the boy-King, not from his mother alone, but from all feminine influences, he sought, through the agency of his nephews, to make of the boy a being as worthless as he was himself. Those who would be enlightened upon these points must read Laporte. This faithful valet of the Queen, who had already suffered so much for her sake—even imprisonment and modified torture—in the time of Richelieu, would not, however, stand contentedly by and see the character of the young King ruined by the worthless Cardinal. On the contrary, although he was well aware that it would cost him his place to do so, Laporte told the Queen what he knew. While acting upon his hints, and withdrawing Louis from his evil associates, Anne cannot have been said to have done much for her son's morality when, as an alternative, she threw the youth into the too-intimate society of her first Lady of the Bedchamber, the one-eyed Madame de Beauvais. This unprincipled woman it was who started the youth upon that career of vice which caused his name later to be publicly associated with one mistress after another.

In the meantime, as a reward for his fidelity, the influence of the vindictive Mazarin was sufficient to obtain the discharge of Laporte. He was not merely sent away by the woman whom, at the risk of his life, he had refused to betray to Cardinal Richelieu, but deprived of his little patrimony, all that he had wherewith to maintain his family. Such is the ingratitude of princes!

When Mazarin returned to France with his army in 1652, the Queen no longer found in him the tender lover, the soft-mannered, amusing man, the sweet Cardinal to whom she had previously been accustomed. On the contrary, he commenced, without the slightest regard for *les bienséances*, to treat her brutally even in public. As an example, upon one occasion, he openly addressed the Queen with the sarcastic remark, "It becomes you well to give me counsels!" Nevertheless, the tender Queen clung to the man closer than ever. What she could not obtain from his love, she sought to win from his pity. The Cardinal was now distinctly the master: he carried his mastery so far as to keep the young King without pocket-money; his parsimony was so great as to compel the lad to wear clothes which were not only worn out, but far too short for him.

To his terrorism of the Parliament and the people of the Fronde, on June 25th, 1652, Condé had added a little bit of personal terrorism as regards Monsieur, who was not backing him up in his nefarious designs quite so actively as was his daughter Mademoiselle. One of Condé's soldiers, disguised as a mason, fired two shots at Monsieur before the Palais de Justice. Gaston, after that, felt that he could not do too much for the Prince. He, at all events, was completely cowed. After his *coup d'état*, as the people still were unwilling to accept his army of Spanish bravos within the walls, Condé retired with his army to Saint-Cloud. Here, while his mistress—the able Madame de Châtillon—was negotiating for him with the Queen and the Court, Mazarin was looking forward to crushing the Prince with the two armies which he now had ready to his

hand. Of these, one was commanded by Turenne, the other by la Ferté.

The former falling upon the victor of Rocroy from Montmartre, Menilmontant and Charenton, the Prince beat a retreat to the gates of Paris, which, to his dismay, he found closed against him. Vainly did he beat against the gates of Saint-Denis and Saint-Antoine. The bourgeois militia within kept them rigidly closed—they had had enough of Condé and his drastic methods. At the gate of Saint-Denis, to make things worse, Turenne overtook his rearguard, and killed some of them with round shot.

Message after message was sent in by the despairing Prince, who saw that he must infallibly be crushed between the two armies—and in the meantime he fought like a demon. Monsieur, however, who received the letters, refused to give any orders for the time; he was afraid to move, although, while his people stood laughing at the fix Condé was in, Mademoiselle, in tears, begged and implored for an order of some sort, to enable her to save the Prince. Her father at length gave her a vague letter to the Maréchal L'Hospital and the Provost of the Merchants, who were holding the arsenal of the Fronde in the Hôtel de Ville. It asked these leaders to give to Mademoiselle "the necessary things."

While the cannon-shots and musketry of the contending armies could be heard without the walls, and the air was murky with smoke, the gallant Mademoiselle made her way across the streets of the city, which were in an uproar. At the Hôtel de Ville she gained but scant sympathy from the leaders of the Fronde, although, in an agony, the young lady represented that Condé was being slaughtered at the very gates.

Assistance, however, came to her aid in the shape of the cries from the Place de la Grève. The infuriated partisans of Condé, without, shouting furiously, "Let us in!—let us drown those Mazarins!" had a greater effect upon L'Hospital and the Provost of the Merchants than the alternate prayers and imprecations of the Princesse.

They gave way, fearful of the fickle populace. Mademoiselle insisted upon a reinforcement for Condé; she insisted, moreover, upon what was more difficult to obtain from the leaders of the Fronde. This was permission for Condé to enter Paris with his troops. She obtained at length all she asked for, and the brave, if over-bold, girl, with the greatest *sang-froid*, traversed the Rue Saint-Antoine with her supports, and helped the entry of convoys of wounded and dead men. Although many of these were personally known to her, Mademoiselle did not appear to have suffered many womanly qualms at the horrid spectacles offered to her eyes, for excess of maidenliness was most distinctly not one of this young lady's failings.

Presently, after having installed herself in a house near the Bastille, the better to superintend the care of the wounded men, Mademoiselle was surprised by the appearance of Condé himself. Although his dead and wounded had been admitted to the streets, as yet his army was fighting against over-powering odds without. The guards at the gates obstinately refused to admit his Spanish troops.

When Condé appeared, he was almost unrecognisable. His hair was matted and bloody, his face black with powder and dust, his clothes in rags, and in his hand a drawn and blood-stained sword, of which he had lost the scabbard!

Sobbing with rage and emotion, Condé greets the warlike Princesse—while vowing that he will fight to the last. Mademoiselle says that she will save him, she will cause Paris to be opened to him; she will even cause the Bastille, held by the Parliamentarians, to take part in the conflict in his favour. As good as her word, this modern Maid of Orleans rushes to the Porte Saint-Antoine. "Will you cause M. le Prince to perish?" This appeal succeeds, although the previous menaces and prayers of Condé himself have been powerless. The despairing cry of Mademoiselle falls, moreover, upon the ears of men who, from witnessing close at hand the bloody combat which Condé has for so long been maintaining with his small army, are

moved by his magnificent and savage courage. They throw open the Porte Saint-Antoine, his troops commence to march in; but those outside the Porte Saint-Denis, where the battle rages fiercely, are still refused admittance. The matter is settled by a pistol-shot, which blows out the brains of the *bourgeois* militia captain in command at that gate; his companions then throw the doors open.

The victory is not gained; it is but a broken and disorganised force which is pouring into the city. It is evident that the armies of Turenne and la Ferté—the Queen, the King, and Mazarin—will pour in in pursuit. These latter are at Charonne, just without the walls. "What, Mazarin in the city? He—the traitor to La Fronde! Never!" Such is the argument now employed by Mademoiselle, as she cries loudly for the drawbridge of the Bastille to be lowered, to permit of her entry to the fortress. The warlike maiden's cry was heard. The Frondeurs, Broussel, father and son, Miron, Charton, Blancmesnil, held the Bastille, and, of all the Frondeurs, they have been the most consistent from the beginning. Did not the outbreak of the revolution commence with the imprisonment of the patriarchal Broussel?—was not Miron one of those who first beat the drum in the streets? And the others, have they ever flinched in upholding the purest principles of the Fronde, the redressing the miseries of the people?

Notwithstanding their principles, all these men had doubtless weakened since the departure from their ranks of Retz, to slumber in his Cardinal's hat under the shadow of Notre Dame. Otherwise, never would they have listened to the prayer of the Princesse to protect a Condé—a slaughterer of the people!

It was the younger Broussel who actually was in command of the Bastille. To him Mademoiselle addressed the sacrilegious request, that the cannon of the Bastille should be turned upon the King's troops at Charonne—although it is more probable that she called them the troops of Mazarin.

And thus she convinced them. Between the infamous

Mazarin and the slaughterer of the people, Condé, these dislocated relics of the original Fronde elected for the latter.

The guns were pointed over the city; they were now swung round and aimed at Charonne, over the heads of the combatants still fighting round the gates. Now, who will fire the first cannon? who will let fly a round shot at his King?

Boom!—a puff of smoke from the grey old walls, and a cannon-ball goes speeding direct to the camp of Majesty—the Bastille has spoken! A *conseiller* of the Parliament, Portail by name, has sent a messenger to Mazarin, with the very clear intimation that the people of Paris do not want him.

That cannon-shot, and the two more that succeeded it, decided the day. They spread consternation in the Royal camps—not for the harm they could do, but for the message that they brought. Paris was against the King! It was no use to fight longer. Condé was saved! Ten minutes later it would have been too late, for the second Royal army, under la Ferté, was in the very act of taking in flank the troops already worn out in the desperate struggle against Turenne. This great commander was glad of the intimation of the will of the people, since it gave him an excuse not to press Condé too hard. Of a princely house himself—that of Bouillon—he did not wish to kill the Prince of the Bourbon line. Support Mazarin he might and would, but, for the sake of Mazarin, absolutely to wipe out those of the Blood Royal, to which he was akin, was another matter.

The entry of Condé's troops, among whom were many of the greatest lords of France, was, after those three cannon-shots from the Bastille, permitted to proceed unmolested. The Prince, therefore, marched in with his men—Spaniards for the most part, and Walloons, men from the Low Countries, in the Spaniards' pay. He did not find all smiles to welcome him as he entered the city. For the *bourgeoisie* feared the presence of these troops of foreigners,

made, moreover, savage by defeat. Well did they know of what excesses they might and probably would be guilty, even within the sheltering walls. Their commander was requested to install them by themselves in a little faubourg, surrounded by a wall, between the Seine and the Bièvre; and, further, to be careful to prevent them from indulging in deeds of pillage and bloodshed. Another reason why the Prince did not find only smiles to welcome him, lay in the fact that there were at this time three distinct Frondes in Paris. In addition to those of the original and pure Fronde that had admitted him, Condé found the existence of two other factions of so-called Frondeurs in the city. One of these was an Orléanist Fronde, which was anxious for the supremacy of Monsieur, as distinct from Condé and la Grande Mademoiselle. The third consisted of that party, and they were numerous, who were ready to welcome back the Queen Regent, for the sake of the boy-King accompanying her, while being at the same time determined to resist to the last the presence of the oppressor of the poor—Mazarin, the traitor.

It was in the last days of June, 1652, that Condé, upon his arrival in Paris, found so many contending elements within the walls that had received him. Seeing that, if he were to preserve his ascendancy, some bold stroke of self-assertion would be necessary, he hit upon the cruellest, most traitorous design to strike down alike those who had assisted him and those who were opposed to him.

To the bloody massacre which he planned Gaston was clearly a conniving party. That cowardly prince, evidently realising that the Orléanist Frondeurs were greatly in the minority, did not shrink from associating himself with Condé and his daughter Mademoiselle in a deed which was to make the name of the hero of Rocroy a byword for centuries to come.

A meeting was arranged to take place in the Hôtel de Ville upon July 4th, to which all friends of peace were convoked, including six magistrates and six *bourgeois* from each quarter, all the *curés*, and others. It was a moral

certainty beforehand that the majority of the Frondeurs present would be of those who, even if they had been willing to save the Prince, were yet in favour of receiving the King—without Mazarin. The convention would, however, contain many partisans of the Prince. Condé, pushed thereto probably by the sombre Chavigny, determined to shoot down this assembly, and accordingly set to work to have loopholes constructed in houses in the Place de la Grève, facing the Hôtel de Ville. He filled these houses and the streets with false masons, cobblers, and, street-porters—soldiers in disguise ; he also passed round the word among all the rapscallions of Paris to aid in his sanguinary enterprise. Although wind of the expected massacre had got about, by some—indeed, by most—it was rejected as unworthy of credence. Nevertheless, there were many who attended quaking in their shoes ; some took the Sacrament before going to the meeting. The most part of those attending, however, argued that it would be impossible that Condé could include in one indiscriminate massacre the most ardent Frondeurs, those of his own party who had not scrupled, for his benefit, to fire the guns of the Bastille upon the King. Both Miron and Charton, the lieutenant of Broussel, were to be present—the very men of all others who had figured so recently as his preservers. The Sheriff Fournier, a personal friend of the Princes, Ferrand, a *conseiller* of the Parliament, one of their most devoted adherents, would be also at the meeting. Surely, then, there would be safety for all ! Not so ! said Condé ; not so, arranged Gaston, Duc d'Orléans !

What settled the matter, irrevocably, was the fact that when the two Princes themselves attended the assembly, they found all present much excited. A herald from the King had just arrived, with a request that the meeting should not be held. This herald was sent away unlistened to ; nevertheless, the meeting, moved by his message, was almost unanimous in demanding " that the King should be recalled—without Mazarin."

The Princes left in a rage, and gave the signal for the

murder to begin. Shots commenced in the crowd, while those behind the loopholes commenced firing upon the windows of the Hôtel de Ville.

Soon the disguised soldiers attempted to storm the building. The company of archers defended the grand staircase with the greatest courage. Although they had but a scanty supply of ammunition, they fired four by four, each time killing four of the attacking party. These displayed likewise the greatest fury and courage; never was there seen a more splendid and devoted combat on both sides than that between the stormers and the defenders of the Hôtel de Ville. The carnage was awful!

The massacre went on until long after nightfall, when, the Hôtel de Ville being for a time in flames, those of the assembly within were nearly suffocated by the smoke. In the meantime, several members of the convocation, notably Charton, attempting to issue forth to go to Condé to ask him to stop the killing, were almost torn to pieces by the crowd, while Miron was killed. The crowd were mostly drunk, being liberally supplied with wine, Condé having had several large barrels conveyed to the Place de la Grève. Many weeping persons, messengers, servants of Condé's own friends, came to him—they found him inexorable, while Monsieur sat peaceably whistling! One man dragged Gaston by the arm, begging him to come and save his master. Monsieur waited until his arm was released—then went on whistling. It was at length Mademoiselle who came to the rescue of the survivors. This was at the time that the Hôtel de Ville was on fire, when messengers more urgent than before arrived to beg for mercy for the imprisoned men.

Hereupon Monsieur calmly remarked to Condé, "My cousin, couldn't you go and put these matters in order?"

"Monseigneur," replied the Prince, "I do not understand them; I feel myself a veritable coward for these sort of things."

Mademoiselle, who was present, said that she would go and stop it all. But she was not able to get through the

infuriated crowd, who fired even upon a priest giving the last Sacrament to a dying man.

At this time the crowd burst into the Hôtel de Ville, and, when the half-suffocated prisoners begged for their lives, they calmly first robbed them, and then let them go upon promise of a ransom. The ruffians took their names and addresses, while giving their own, so fearless were they of punishment. The ransoms were duly paid next day, by those who had escaped easier than they had expected.

Mademoiselle went again a little later. Meeting the young Duc de Beaufort, who had been superintending the slaughter on behalf of the Princes, he gallantly escorted her to the burning ruins. She found none but dead and dying on her way, and seemed to have been far more highly amused at seeing the *bourgeoises* standing in their doorways barely clothed, on account of the heat, flirting with their similarly clad male neighbours, than appalled by the fact that the legs and arms of the dead in the passing carts "knocked her on the nose"!

She saved the Provost of the Merchants, whom she found hidden in a closet, from an imaginary danger of a mob which had already retired from the scene of the massacre.

Such, then, was the massacre of July 4th, 1652. It was a crime which justly aroused against le Grande Condé the indignation and horror of his own people. Mademoiselle herself said, "It killed the party." It certainly killed Condé in the popular imagination; no one had any respect for him after this, especially as, while opening negotiations with Mazarin, he remained in Paris, indulging in the most unbridled debauchery with an actress. Even his own partisans turned against him, for he had forfeited their respect. The *conseiller* Croissy accused Condé to his face of being "in intelligence with Mazarin," while his friend de Rieux did worse. He insulted the Prince so grossly that Condé struck him. De Rieux returned the blow, after which the pair fought like a couple of school boys, going on striking one another even after the by-standers had hold of them each round the body!

The deed of blood, however, had the effect for which it was chiefly intended. Mazarin, believing that Condé was actually the master of Paris, and strong, came to terms with the Prince, and agreed to retire into retreat elsewhere. He was indeed anxious to retire, taking with him the Queen and the Court, to Lyons—since no city in the north would receive him. From taking this step he was, however, prevented by Turenne. The Cardinal therefore went through the pretence of going into retirement alone once more.

The Fronde now came to an end. Condé left Paris with an army which Spain sent him under the Duc de Lorraine, and had various indecisive battles with Turenne. After this, taking the young King into the same carriage as himself, Turenne brought him into Paris—opposed by no party—on October 21st, 1652.

CHAPTER IX

The Vicomte de Turenne

1652—1659

THERE is a story on record about the great soldier Turenne which is exemplary of his character—phlegmatic to the highest degree.

Having risen early one morning, he was leaning out of a window, when suddenly one of the servants aroused the contemplative General by a tremendous salute, applied where schoolboys are apt to make acquaintance with the birch. The Marshal drew in his head quickly.

"Monseigneur!" cried the alarmed domestic, falling upon his knees, "forgive me! I thought it was George."

"Well," replied the Vicomte, rubbing himself ruefully, "even if it were George it was not necessary to strike *quite* so hard!"

It was the sole reproof the man received. At the hands of any other noble he would have been cruelly punished, but it was the nature of Turenne never to feel an emotion. To judge by his Memoirs, it would seem as though the Vicomte had never loved, never hated. They are merely the bald statement of military operations, with just one word of approbation for Gustavus Adolphus, and one for the great General Mercy thrown in. In a time in which many of the deeds of heroism reached to the apotheosis of romantic rhodomantade or poetic daring, one comes back to bald prose in Turenne. A reasoner, one who saw that what was required in war was cold common sense

rather than an over-warm enthusiasm, Turenne made of war a logical concern—a question of mathematical demonstration rather than one of dash and fire. His prosaic mode of looking at the game of war more than anything else shows the solidity of the man, even if it does seem to betoken a middle-class, unimaginative nature. His prosaic evenness was probably inherited from his Dutch mother, who was the daughter of William the Silent of Orange.

This solidity of character was displayed, singularly to the advantage of the young King, at the time that Mazarin was anxious to make a headlong retreat to Lyons, taking the Queen and Louis with him. This was in August, 1652, and it marks a period when Turenne, the unimaginative, usually content to remain humbly in the background, for once took the initiative.

In fact, of this time it may be said, instead of Mazarin having a policy and Turenne following it because he was obliged to, that the Vicomte it was who had the policy, and that he compelled Mazarin to follow it, for his own welfare. Turenne it was who sent the Italian away, and sent him away alone, but at the same time who took care so to arrange matters as to assure the possibility of his return.

When the army of Spaniards came to the assistance of Condé, after the massacre at the Hôtel de Ville, it was all that the Vicomte could do to prevent the flight of the whole Court. Not, however, did he merely prevent it, but he took also such excellent measures as to keep Condé and the Duc de Lorraine in check for a whole month. Thus he restored confidence in the Court, who, even if Condé were absent, were yet extremely afraid of Monsieur, still in Paris. Turenne laughed at their fears of Gaston, a man himself ever fearful, and he carried the King in triumph into Paris.

Having got him there, when Retz, issuing from Notre Dame, and all the notables of every faction desired to come and meet the King, it was to the Louvre, under his own eye and that of his troops, that Turenne bade them come to offer their welcome. Thus, by his firmness and display

of armed force, he gave actual effect to what may truly be described as the restoration of Louis XIV.

The young King, restored thus to his kingdom at the age of fourteen, was able to treat as a conqueror all this magistracy, who had, by the ability of Turenne, been conquered without even a combat. His first act was to administer to all those assembled what may perhaps be described as "a dressing down." The boy-Monarch proudly ordered, in his declaration of absolute Monarchy, that in future the Parliament was not to concern itself with any public affairs, not to meddle with the question of finance, and, above all, not to take any measures whatever against any one to whom he might think fit to confide the administration. Thus, as Turenne had intended, was clearly left open the door for the re-entry of Mazarin. The Cardinal, reassured, actually returned to Paris a month or two later, in February, 1653. Now we are able to understand why Turenne vigorously refused to allow the retreat of the Court to Lyons. To have done so would have been fatal to his army, for—with a large escort detached to accompany the flying Court—he would not have had sufficient troops left to make the successful stand that he did before Condé and the Spaniards. Turenne alone had seen that had the Court retired, there could have been no restoration of Louis XIV., no restoration of the beneficent rule of Julius Mazarino.

It may be a matter of surprise to many that the great Vicomte should have remained faithful to Mazarin in this matter. Why, having placed Louis upon the throne, did he not support him there alone, leave the Italian in the lurch outside, instead of bringing him back? The reply is simple. Knowing the tendencies of the Queen, Turenne calculated from the first that Mazarin would be sure to be brought back somehow—sooner or later. He therefore thought it wiser that this should be accomplished at once, without any further military complications or any risk of subsequent revolutions in the Court. The Vicomte alone grasped the fact that the presence of the rascally Italian was necessary for the preservation of peace in Paris, to

maintain the undisputed supremacy of the Crown. Therefore it was that he brought Mazarin back to the Queen.

We have said that the instincts of Turenne were purely military. He had had other soldierly reasons for all that he had done, apart from those affecting the State policy. In those days an army and its commander were often one—the army almost belonged to its leader; and this was notably so with the army of Turenne. But, in the ravaged state of the country outside Paris, there was neither food nor shelter left. The Vicomte was anxious to obtain both for his troops during the ensuing winter, otherwise he would soon, owing to desertions, have been without an army at all. The requisite food and shelter for his troops Turenne obtained by bringing the King and the Court to Paris. Thus, while playing for the hand of the Court and Mazarin —he was above all playing for his own—he preserved his fighting machine intact.

That he was but a bad politician, if a good soldier, was, however, apparent from the fact that the civil war in the south, the resistance against Mazarin in Guyenne, lasted for another year, owing to this policy of bringing back Mazarin. But this was because the Cardinal was still determined to force the hated Duc d'Epernon, who was to marry one of his nieces, back upon the people of the south. Possibly this was an eventuality which had not been foreseen by the unimaginative Turenne. Nor had he foreseen other anti-Mazarin disturbances which broke out in the north.

Before the return of Mazarin, the first action of the Queen had been to send for the now Cardinal Retz and to lull him to security with soft words. She told him that he it was who alone had put the King in Paris. In a sense this was true, for had not Retz been the real cause of the division of the Fronde? He was not petted for long. Upon December 18th, 1652, Cardinal Retz was suddenly and unexpectedly clapped into the Château de Vincennes. It was after his safe instalment under lock and key that Mazarin had been bold enough to venture back to Paris.

It might have been imagined that, before allowing himself to be saddled with this master, Turenne, who might, if he had chosen, have assumed a military dictatorship, would have come to some sort of terms with Mazarin. He neglected entirely to do anything of the sort, with the result that he soon found the suspicious Cardinal saddling him with rival commanders, really spies to watch him. Thus de la Ferté, a man of no great ability, and the brutal Hocquincourt, one of the proposed assassins of Condé, were always present with his army—to hamper his movements with their effete counsels.

Turenne, whom Mazarin considered to be lucky, was nevertheless maintained as Commander-in-Chief after a fashion, but, instead of ordering M. de la Ferté or M. Hocquincourt, he was compelled to request these Generals politely to be kind enough to comply with his wishes. Their delays and reverses caused him much trouble and disappointment, but he preserved the equability of his temper and *sang-froid* under all circumstances. Often, when he found that his coadjutors would not back him up, he acted without them. After fighting during the whole of 1653 against his old commander Condé, he was able to realise in 1654 the danger to himself of these two minions of Mazarin. In that year the great Spanish army was before Arras, which place it was proposed to recapture. Turenne insisting that it was necessary to force their lines, de la Ferté and Hocquincourt did not fancy the business. They said it was impossible—and nearly made it so by failing to assist in time at a night attack. When the breaking dawn found the two still upon the way to the place of rendezvous, Turenne had already defeated the enemy alone!

Another occasion of the slovenliness of de la Ferté was at Valenciennes in 1656. Turenne was besieging the town when the Spaniards, breaking the sluices, let the water go from the neighbouring marshes. Attacking under cover of this rush of water, they found de la Ferté's corps without any advanced guard or outposts. He and all his officers were taken, and four thousand of his men killed in a short

quarter of an hour. Turenne calmly drew off all his men, baggage, and guns in good order, but, instead of retreating into France, remained in hostile territory. Although the victorious Spaniards received large reinforcements, when they found the bold attitude which Turenne had assumed near Quesnoy, they drew off without daring to attack the Vicomte.

In fighting against Condé, of whom the Spaniards had made their commander, but with tied hands, the Vicomte de Turenne had an immense advantage from his personal knowledge of their habits. We can almost imagine his being sorry for Condé, with whom, for that matter, he kept up a regular correspondence. If Turenne gained a victory over Condé, he would immediately write to him fully and respectfully to explain what were the means by which he had succeeded. On the other hand, should Condé gain a success, he despatched a note to Turenne to ask him what he thought of his tactics. That there was, however, cause to be sorry for Condé, Turenne must have recognised, knowing the inflexible etiquette of the Spanish army which blocked all the movements of this once dashing General. One day Turenne advanced very close to observe the entrenched camp of his old commander. The officers of his staff were surprised that a man of his experience should thus risk his life and theirs, or else the capture of all. The reply of the Vicomte was amusing. "Don't trouble your heads. The commandant of this quarter will undertake nothing without his Chief. He is Fernando de Solis; I know him. He will send to General Fuensaldagno, who will not dream of moving without first warning the Archduke. The Archduke, however, has so much respect for the Prince de Condé that he will send to beg him to be kind enough to come and decide with him in a Council of War what measures should be taken. So we have got plenty of time to look about us; we risk absolutely nothing."

Talk about red tape in the British War Office in the twentieth century! What must it have been like in the

Spanish army in the middle of the seventeenth ? Unhappy victor of Rocroy, of Nordlingen, of Lens ! he was indeed well punished for his sins, for siding with the enemies of his country. He had yet worse to put up with when—instead of the Archduke—Don Juan of Austria, son of the King of Spain, came to replace him with the army. At every halt Don Juan used to put himself to bed, and etiquette would not allow of his being awakened ! One of the best opportunities for delivering battle throughout the war was lost to Condé, because no one dared to offend against decorum and disturb the slumbering Prince !

Thus it was that, until the year 1659, despite all his difficulties, Turenne was able to sustain Mazarin upon his broad back and brawny shoulders, just as Condé had maintained him by his victories in the years before the Fronde. In that year, Mazarin having, by a series of blunders, lost Catalonia and abandoned Portugal, the ally of France, to the tender mercies of Spain, a peace was made, which was called the Peace of the Pyrenees. The peace was not particularly glorious for France, while for Spain it saved the Low Countries from complete capture by Turenne, and all the strong places that he had taken were now returned. There were two reasons for desiring its completion. The first, that both France and Spain were in a state of penury ; the second, that Anne of Austria and Philip of Spain desired to make an alliance of their families by marriage.

The peace was signed on September 7th, 1659. Condé was permitted to return to France and recover his belongings. Those, however, of his friends were not restored to them. While those who had followed his banner were therefore irretrievably ruined, the Prince found himself once more reinstated as a Prince of the Blood. He was given in addition the government of Burgundy. Nevertheless, he was too deeply compromised by his past ever in the future to recover the same brilliant position that he had held after Rocroy.

CHAPTER X

Louis takes the Reins

1659—1661

At the time (1659) that Mazarin signed the treaty of peace with Spain upon the banks of the Bidassoa, he was the happiest man alive. He wrote as follows: "I shall not stop long in the Basque country, unless it be to amuse myself in seeing their whale fishing, or in learning the Basque language, or else in practising jumping like them."

Having arranged the peace, his mind became fuller than ever of questions of marriage. As we have seen, to marry one niece to the Duc d'Epernon, the Cardinal had not hesitated to plunge the whole south of France into civil war. To decide the Prince de Conti to marry Anna Martinozzi, a second niece, he had already given to this unwarlike young man command of the army of the Pyrenees, which failed in Catalonia and Arragon. A third niece he gave to the Duke of Modena, who caused the French troops to attack and fail before Pavia. A fourth, Olympia Mancini, had completely captivated the heart of the young King, who was anxious to marry her. Despite his ambition, Mazarin was compelled to go through the farce of disinterestedly writing and advising him against this marriage, owing to the very strong attitude taken up by the Queen. Her Spanish pride was aroused; moreover, she wished ardently for a Spanish marriage. Therefore Anne declared positively that if Louis carried out his project of marriage with the beautiful Olympia, she would set up her second son against him.

Louis had already had a violent love affair with Maria Mancini before his passion for Olympia, whom he now resigned only to make of her his mistress after her nuptials with the Comte de Soissons. This prince was the son of Prince Thomas de Savoie, and Olympia became the mother of the Prince Eugène, a future scourge of France.

Failing the French King, through the matrimonial alliance of another of the nieces—Hortense—Mazarin sought to become uncle-in-law to the English one. He offered her to the young Charles II., who was a good deal at the French Court in the days that he was poor and without a kingdom. Since the Cardinal offered to this venal prince, with Hortense, a dowry of six millions of *livres*, it is difficult to understand why the marriage was never consummated.

To the one of his seven nieces who had least of all, Cardinal Mazarin gave a dowry of not less than six hundred thousand *livres* of those days, worth many times as much now. She also had the Government of Auvergne. To the richest, Hortense, whose husband, the Marquis de la Meilleraye, took the title of Duc de Mazarin, there came upon the death of her uncle an enormous yearly income, equal to six millions of *livres* of to-day.

It is no wonder that the little black rascal Fouquet, the financier of the Cardinal, was anxious for peace to be concluded. For he was almost at the end of his tether, since, to the enormous expenditure of the Cardinal, for the war, for the dowries, and for the sums which he was personally amassing, there was now another and equally great cause for lavish extravagance. This was the sum required for the amusements of the young King, the endless fêtes and ballets which the Mancini girls got up to perform in with him, all of which cost the most fabulous expense. It was by these amusements that Mazarin held the young King—through his nieces.

When the reader of the records of that day reads first the account of one of the ridiculous ballets of Louis, in which the King figured as the Sun-god, Orpheus, Mercury, and several other characters, and then turns to read the

records left by the missionaries sent by Saint Vincent de Paul, describing the untold horrors and miseries of the wretched people, it is strange if one wish does not arise involuntarily to his mind. And that is a wish that the French Revolution had come earlier—that it had burst upon the Court of the gorgeous Louis XIV. rather than that of the unhappy Louis XVI. That, however, was not to be, although the heartless extravagance of the earlier King was distinctly the whetstone to sharpen the knife for his descendant.

While all of these marriages, including that of the young King with Marie Thérèse, daughter of Philip IV. of Spain, were taking place, we must not forget another duty which devolved upon Fouquet—another cause of the impoverishment of France. This was the necessity of providing a secret police for himself, which was to hold King and Ministers alike. These were found among the nobility, Fouquet purchasing their friendship by helping them to keep up their rank and position. That worthless profligate the Marquis de Vardes ; the King's first instructress in the paths of vice, Madame la Beauvais ; M. de Créqui, M. de Richelieu, M. de Brancas, and others, were all in the pay of this finance agent of Cardinal Mazarin. Of these, to M. de Brancas alone was paid considerably over half a million of *livres*, and the others in proportion.

It was not very long after the days when we found Mazarin anxious to practise jumping in the Basque provinces that his aspirations towards the saltatory art received a wholesome and permanent check. He was seized with the gout, and had to take to his bed, but did not on that account change his manner of life. While confined to his couch, we see the arch-juggler as inveterate a card-player as ever, nor did he neglect his customary traffic in places. For long he, being himself the state, had trafficked in the army which supported that state, making large sums over the supplies of all descriptions for the army of Turenne. Further, he speculated in piracy, having a considerable share in privateers which preyed upon the Dutch shipping in time of peace. For this he was called to account by

Holland; but although the Italian stopped the piracy, in spite of promises, the ill-gotten gains were never restored. Perhaps he merely considered the piratical acts in the light of a useful corollary to his policy of abasing both Spain and Holland, a policy which caused his alliance with Oliver Cromwell.

It may not be generally known, but it is nevertheless a fact, that upon the death of the Emperor Ferdinand III., in 1657, the Austrian Leopold was only elected to succeed him upon giving certain undertakings to France, Sweden, and some of the Rhenish princes. These were to give no help whatever to the Spaniards, with the result that, in despair, the most Catholic country in Europe turned to that where Puritanism reigned supreme.

To Oliver Cromwell Spain offered, as the price for his assistance, to capture and return to him Calais, which had been torn from England in the time of Mary. Thereupon Cromwell inquired of Mazarin what he would give as the price of an alliance, when the wily Italian offered some Flemish towns, which had, however, to be captured first by Turenne or his lieutenants. They were Mardick, Gravelines, and especially Dunkirk, a port at the very doors of France. The bargain was made, and, by Turenne's brilliant battle of the Dunes, upon June 14th, 1658, Dunkirk was captured and duly handed over to the English. It was a dangerous position in which to place a rival power, and does not say much for the foreign policy of Mazarin, which thus opened up the door for England into France. Fortunately for this latter country, Cromwell died in September that same year; and when Charles Stuart "got his own again," for the sake of a good sum in pocket-money, he infamously—and against his country's interests—sold Dunkirk back to France.

In the meantime the marriage of Louis with Marie Thérèse had reversed the anti-Spanish policy of Mazarin. For in that marriage—owing to the fact that Philip IV. had only one sickly boy living, by his second wife, a mere baby in arms—glorious possibilities were seen for France.

It was hoped that the Infanta or her children might inherit the monarchy of Spain. When these visionary schemes were to be realised, and how, was only to be seen from forty-two to fifty-six years later, during the long wars of the Spanish Succession. Throughout the whole of that long period Louis XIV. remained upon the throne, to observe the result of the policy of a bygone generation. We can imagine him then, as a spectre, standing alone, looking out over the desolation of his country—back through the vista of years to the early days of frolic and delight with Maria and Olympia Mancini—thinking better had it been for him had he listened to the dictates of his heart rather than to the dictates of his mother's policy. Then had not Eugene, great-nephew of Mazarin, held in his hand the whip of scorpions to chastise the bare back of him who might have espoused Mazarin's beautiful niece.

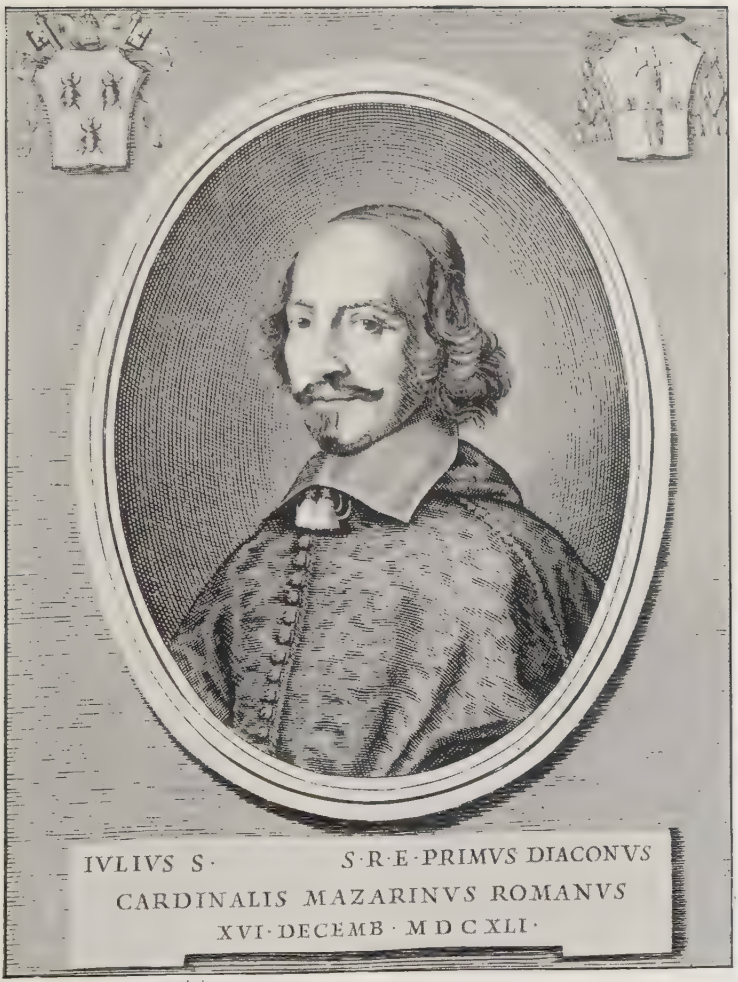
We will soon, however, return to those days of frolic and delight, continuing—as Mazarin himself is drawing near his end, the gout gaining upon him.

To the very last, as he continued his little meannesses at cards between intervals of the administration of the Holy Sacraments, so did the Italian continue his trafficking in places. Mazarin actually died, declaring to the Queen with his last breath that he insisted upon having one hundred thousand crowns for an appointment which he had made at her request.

Five minutes later the Queen's nominee had his post—for nothing!

Cardinal Mazarin died upon March 9th, 1661, leaving behind him, as the result of the recent peace and the Spanish marriage, the reputation of being a successful negotiator, which he scarcely deserved. His triumphs—the glory of the Peace of Westphalia, the recent treaty of the Pyrenees—may be said to have been prepared for him in advance by the seriously thought out policy of his predecessor, Richelieu. What the Great Cardinal had sowed, Mazarin had reaped. It was his luck—he was a lucky gamester to the end!

The fortune which he left behind him was the largest



From a contemporary print.

CARDINAL MAZARIN.

which had ever been amassed by any individual in France. It amounted to the enormous sum of one hundred millions of *livres* of those days. Of this there remained, concealed in actual cash, fifteen millions. It was because, knowing of this treasure, hidden in certain fortresses, Fouquet did not make mention of it to the young King, that the Minister of Finance incurred the Royal displeasure. The rival and enemy of Fouquet was Colbert, the Intendant of Mazarin. He too knew of the existence of this huge quantity of hidden specie, and—only too glad to get an opportunity of doing the *noir diablotin* a bad turn—he informed the King.

Louis possessed himself of the fifteen millions, while leaving the rest of the fortune of Mazarin to his relations. It made of the King a rich man at the time of the commencement of his independent rule ; but he bore a grudge against Fouquet. Although for a time he left him in his grand position of Procureur-Général of the Parliament, Louis was merely waiting to crush him. Of this resentment Fouquet, who considered himself secure in the known partiality of Queen Anne, was, if not unconscious, at all events not alarmed ; the Finance Minister imagined himself safe in the protection of his Royal mistress. With an enemy like Colbert, however, at the monarch's elbow, he was very much mistaken in thinking that the young King's irritation would be easily allayed.

That the pleasure-loving Louis, once emancipated from the thraldom of Mazarin, in whom had rested unlimited sway, should prove capable not only of asserting himself, but of himself ruling, came as a surprise to others besides Fouquet. It was to Colbert first of all—when he inquired to what Minister he was now to go for orders—that Louis replied, "Come to me ; I alone will give orders in future." Louis was at that time not quite twenty-two years old, and, finding that the young King meant his words, that able man, Colbert, set about at once giving him all the instruction in his power, to enable the Monarch to carry out his expressed intention of personal rule. Of instruction indeed of every description the young man was in

the greatest need, for it had been part of Mazarin's policy of keeping him in the background to leave the son of Anne of Austria in a state of the crassest ignorance.

In addition to the extreme ignorance with which Louis assumed the absolute power in 1661, he brought with him to the lofty position the firmest belief in his own omnipotence—imagined himself heaven-sent, divine! It must be conceded that the adulation with which his arrival was met on all sides, not only from his own subjects, but from the rulers of all the States of Europe, was but too well calculated to confirm the young King in his belief.

It was therefore no matter for surprise if—whether from Colbert or later on from Louvois—Louis absolutely declined to receive any enlightenment, except such as suited himself. Thus, he was never willing to realise the existence of obstacles or real difficulties; it sufficed to him, in his calm serenity, his sovereign grace, to say, "I will it so," and to imagine that his divine will would alone prove the blade of an axe strong enough to mow down difficulties and opposition, no matter of what description.

The ability of Colbert, from the start, lay in his understanding this ignorance, this bland self-confidence, and in taking his measures accordingly. From the commencement, he took Louis the right way: first, in giving him more money than he had ever had in his life before, in the shape of the concealed millions; second, in—while showing him certain figures, laying before him certain facts—persuading the King that he was doing everything himself.

A few words as to the origin and character of Colbert may not here be out of place. He came from a family of merchants, one noted, however, for great military courage—he himself had three sons killed on the field of battle. This courage in some members of his family—notably his uncle Pussort—amounted to absolute ferocity. Of Colbert himself, it was said by those who knew him well, that never was there a man who had so much heart, who had such a strong character, and who was, with it all, so violent.

Such, then, was the disposition of the Minister who, for many years to come, at the will of his semi-divine master, was to be expected to work miracles—in comparison with which the making of bricks out of straw would be mere child's play!

CHAPTER XI

The Radiance of Madame

1661

MANY a man, receiving the universal adulation which treated him as a god, might become a fool, while the excessive *empressement* of the fair sex might transform him into a nerveless creature without backbone.

Not so was it with Louis XIV. Taking all this as his due, it had but little effect upon him. He remained judicial, high, dry and hard, cold. Sustained by his excessive pride, even in his passions, his moments of greatest folly, he can hardly be said to have let himself go.

Circumstances favoured him, to make of the pinnacle upon which he was left seated, at the death of Mazarin, the only landmark of importance upon the European horizon. Idolised at home, on account of his youth, his fine form, his handsome features, it was the hope of the people that, after so much misery, from him would surely now flow the fountain of relief. Abroad, the universal ruin of so many years of terrible warfare left none to oppose him.

Where were now the strong rulers of other days—Elizabeth, Charles V., Philip II., Suleiman the Turk, or the Popes Julius II. or Sextus Quintus? Gone!—gone for ever, were these great ones of the earth, and Gustavus Adolphus into the bargain. Nowhere—throughout the length and breadth of Europe—unless it be in the little corner of Holland, is there the shadow of any power visible likely to curb the ambition of this young Louis XIV. There is no longer

any power left on the broad plains of Spain; her gates are now wide open to Portugal, should she be seized with a fancy for the invasion of her late oppressor. The only drawback will be that there is no wheat to make a loaf of bread, not sufficient corn to feed a mule. Nor can the young Austrian ruler, now become Emperor, hold out the hand of succour to his relative and national ally. Leopold has all that he can do to defend the famine-stricken Hungary from the Turk, while the uplands and valleys of Germany are but an unpeopled waste, swept clean of homesteads or inhabitants. What now of the power of the Pope? In so far as the prelacy is concerned, Louis now chooses to arrogate the powers of the Pope to himself, and there is none to oppose this gallant young cavalier, this brilliant dancer of ballets. For even the Jesuits are carried away with the flowing tide. While granting absolution to the young King, they likewise swell the throng of his worshippers.

England remains—what of her? To the throne of Great Britain has just ascended the worthless first cousin of Louis, Charles II., who, instead of offering any obstacle, becomes the French King's lapdog, only too glad to pick up any scraps that may be thrown to him, or traitorously to betray his own subjects, by secret treaties which may enhance the glory, we will not say of France, but of the French King.

There yet remains upon the map Flanders, the Low Countries. That is well, since they will be able to nourish the armies of Louis!

Surely, with such a field open to him, the King of France, at the age of twenty-two, is not so very much to blame if he believes what the people say, when they tell him he is not man but a god. For does not even distant Poland fall humbly before his throne, to sue for his divine protection against Russia, to place at his disposal their crown for his kinsmen—be they the humpbacked Conti or the blood-stained Condé? Does not the world own him omnipotent? For a time, a short breathing-space, the young hero of such illimitable power, the owner of Mazarin's concealed millions,

does not think of crushing his neighbours abroad with his omnipotence. Nay, there are more pleasant paths in which to stray; the enchantments of song, the dance, the mazy fields of love, afford more entertainment at home than the cannon, the lance, the warrior steed in foreign lands!

The fairy, by the touch of whose magic wand the reign of enchantment was to commence, flashed upon the Court of France twenty days after the death of Mazarin, when Henrietta of England married her cousin Philippe, Duc d'Orléans, younger brother of Louis XIV. This young lady, who now first burst into notoriety as Madame, was just seventeen at the time of her marriage. The youngest member of the family of Charles I., she had been taken over at an early age by Lady Morton to join her mother, Queen Henrietta Maria, in her exile in the Court of her fathers. In Paris, the Queen of Charles I., much against the wishes of her son Charles II., who at that time had no Catholic leanings, brought up her youngest daughter as a Catholic. The English Queen had been permitted by her sister-in-law, Anne of Austria, to establish as a royal foundation a nunnery of Visitandine nuns upon the Heights of Chaillot, where now stands the Palace of the Trocadéro. Of this very mundane convent, the daughter of Henri IV. made the Mother-Superior the aforetime beloved of her brother Louis XIII., Mademoiselle Louise de Lafayette. This lady, who, when young and beautiful, some thirty years previously, had nearly been the cause of Louis XIII. divorcing Anne—which fate that Queen well deserved—had in her convent of Chaillot blossomed out into the Mère Angélique. Thus Mère Angélique it was, assisted by the Père Cyprien de Gamaches, who superintended the education of the young English Princess. Between them they made of the young Henriette, as we must now call her, a well-educated young lady and a Catholic—devout we will not say. Her mother took care to make of her a thorough Frenchwoman. Among the other accomplishments, and they were many, possessed by the young Princess when her education was completed,

were a perfect knowledge of the art of dress and a perfect knowledge of the art of dancing.

Both were of considerable importance to her in her short and brilliant, if unhappy, career. For, by the former, she was enabled so to conceal a slight crookedness of her person as ever to appear the soul of grace; by the latter, she charmed her brother-in-law the King, after her marriage. Before her marriage, in her youth, she had appeared too thin and scraggy to suit the taste of Louis; for this reason he then never paid any attention to his cousin. However, after her marriage to his brother Philippe and his own to Marie Thérèse, her thinness was not so apparent, and she became the object of his unbounded admiration and affection. The charm of feature of this young lady was, according to all her chroniclers, only to be equalled by her charm of manner and her kindliness of heart. Her sprightliness was immense, her spirits wonderful. She was thoughtless, gay, clever, the life and soul of any society in which she happened to be in. No one could sing like her, no one knew so much of the literature of the day, no one could dance as she could. Of real love, despite the fact that her love affairs and disappointments amounted almost to tragedies, she never had any to give, save to her unworthy brothers Charles II. and James, Duke of York, afterwards James II. By the former she was equally beloved; indeed—in so far as his selfish nature permitted—Charles always displayed the greatest tenderness towards his little sister. But he would not have been the man he was if he had not always and ever been ready and anxious to *exploiter* the love that his sister bore him as a means to secure material advantages—in the shape of money from Louis XIV. Louis also, once the dream of passion was over, and Louise de la Vallière had replaced Henriette upon the scene of his fickle affections, never scrupled to make of his sister-in-law a go-between with Charles in their continual mutual plottings, to the disadvantage of England or Holland and the aggrandisement of Louis XIV.

Thus Madame, throughout her short life, was one, if not

the greatest, of the political forces in Europe. Her advice to both Louis and Charles was always sound, from the point of view which she took of it—that of a Frenchwoman and a Catholic. But it was for the sake of her brother alone that, after her reign of glory was over, she still continued to remain at the beck and call of Louis. In 1661, however, and for several years afterwards, the young Princess of England absolutely ruled the Court, much to the disgust of la Grande Mademoiselle, who in her girlhood had ever been careful to assert her own right of precedence over her young English cousin. Now, however, Henriette, become Madame, ruled everything and everybody, even to the young Spanish Queen. Madame it was who was consulted, who arranged everything; the stiff and ceremonious Marie Thérèse was, with all her bothersome etiquette, left out in the cold—nowhere!

While we often read in history of women who, a flame of fire themselves, inspire similar burning passions in others, Henriette stands out as a singular exception from all such, who usually possess strong frames, exuberant health, or complexions in which the warm blood-tints prevail. Having neither strength, health, nor the colouring which would seem to betoken any tendency to exuberance of love, Madame nevertheless excited the wildest passions in others, while remaining herself, at best, but a woman with a kind, affectionate nature. Her principal chronicler has been herself, through the agency of her devoted friend Madame de la Fayette.

To Madeleine de la Vergne, Marquise de la Fayette, a lady ten years her senior, Henriette from time to time dictated her own Memoirs, and this she did with singular frankness, without omitting much or suppressing her faults. Much also has been learned from the testimony of Cosnac, Bishop of Valence, a violent priest, an intriguer and dangerous, who was her evil counsellor. In his enthusiasm for the great cause—the conversion of England by force to the Catholic faith—Cosnac would, if he could, have used Madame's influence upon her brother Charles II. to plunge

all England into blood. To this she would have willingly assented, so great upon her was the influence of the bigotry of her foolish mother, who had brought her up without any principle. Being thus fatally and unconsciously corrupted from childhood, Henriette possessed within herself the lack of moral balance which was the inheritance of both monarchies. She had three faithful defenders in the three men who plead for her in their literary gems, pleading from the present to the future. Molière, Racine, and the Bishop Bossuet defend her and remain faithful as the lovers of her spirit. Racine has made her evident everywhere in his work; Molière would never have risked *Tartufe* but for Madame; while Bossuet, to whom she gave her ring in her dying moments, received with that gift his truest inspiration.

An example of the passions which the presence of Henriette was wont to produce in the hearts of men was seen even before her marriage, when, as a young girl, she had accompanied her proselytising mother into England. The object of Henrietta Maria was to induce her son Charles to risk his head, like his father before him, by—in return for the gold of Louis—professing the Catholic faith. Upon the excuse of the approaching marriage of the young Princess, Henriette was taken to see her brother, the real reason, however, being that her youthful and innocent entreaties were expected to do that which the more violent exhortations of the mother might fail to accomplish.

Upon her return, the crossing on the ship was greatly prolonged. The ambassador who accompanied her, who was the young Duke of Buckingham, and the Admiral upon whose ship she was, quarrelled so violently over her that swords were drawn. The passion of Buckingham, who was the son of the former lover of Anne of Austria, continued for years with the greatest violence, and was the cause of much trouble to the innocent Henriette.

During this journey the young Princess was very ill, and, immediately upon her arrival in Paris, this frail flower was delivered over in marriage to the Duc d'Orléans, now known as Monsieur, like his uncle Gaston before him. It was

impossible for the young girl to be united to a more worthless specimen of humanity than this young man of twenty.

He can, from earliest youth, be said to have possessed more the attributes of a woman than of a man. To the age of thirteen he was brought up in girl's clothes, and looked like a pretty little Italian. His companion was the son of Madame la Choisy, who was also a big boy dressed in girl's clothes.

As he grew up, Philippe became the butt of his brother Louis, while the partial mother always decided in favour of her elder son. The Bishop Cosnac says that Anne did so with reason, since it was impossible, despite all this cleric's influence, to make anything approaching a manly boy of the young Prince.

The boy still remained a girl in his tastes when he was married, but unfortunately, while passing his time in dressing himself, or in dressing the maids-of-honour of the Queen, he, girl-like, developed a passion for lovers who were not of the female sex. Thus, while devoting himself to his young associates—the Comte de Guiche, Marsillac, and others—the first fear of this child-man upon his marriage in March, 1661, was lest his wife should gain their affections and so ween them away from himself. Nevertheless, Philippe received his young wife well; he was charmed to have in her a girl-comrade upon whom he could try the latest fashions. He was proud of her and pleased that she should be thought pretty, except by his young man associates.

When the King fell in love with Madame, Philippe was delighted, thinking that through her now his Court in the Château of the Palais-Royal would become the real Royal Court. Further, he thought and hoped that his young wife would protect him, and moreover gain for him his most ardent desire. This was an appanage, in the shape of a Government of his own. He wished to become the King of Languedoc, as had been Gaston and, before him, the Ducs de Montmorency.

The first occasion after their marriage when the rising radiance of Madame shone upon the Court in public was

only a very few days after their union, upon the occasion of the marriage of Maria Mancini to the Prince Colonna, who was the Constable of the King of Naples. This Maria, who is described as having possessed "eyes of flame," was the first love of Louis. The King would most undoubtedly have made of her his Queen, and that with the approbation of Mazarin, had not the Cardinal discovered in time her dangerous nature and that she was plotting against him. After that she was done for—her chance was gone, her angry uncle betrothing Maria, willy-nilly, to the Prince Colonna. As her sister Olympia had succeeded her in the royal affections, it was with hatred in her heart for Louis that the young lady with the flaming eyes departed to her exile from the Court of France.

At this wedding Henriette made a most successful appearance, and Louis first recognised her attractions. A week or two later, while Henriette remained with her husband at the Palais-Royal, the King and Queen with the Court removed for the summer days to the delightful retreat of Fontainebleau. Here, before his departure, Louis arranged that his charming young sister-in-law was to follow him as soon as possible.

CHAPTER XII

The Glamour of Fontainebleau

1661

It did not require many weeks of marriage for the Princesse Henriette d'Angleterre to discover how utterly base was the character of Philippe d'Orléans. A few weeks at the Palais-Royal, which then was surrounded with extensive gardens, a week or two at the charming residence of Saint-Cloud, afforded ample time for enlightenment. While Monsieur, imitating the customs of Henri III., that effeminate last of the Valois kings, devoted the whole of his time to his *mignons*, Madame enjoyed none of the ordinary delights of the honeymoon. Accordingly, she passed her time in the society of ladies of rank, among whom we find some notable names. La Grande Mademoiselle, visiting her, found her depressed and lonely; the Duchesse de Châtillon, the mistress of Condé, talked with her about politics; Mademoiselle de Mortemart—later, as Madame de Montespan, to become the mother of several of the King's children—helped to pass the time in feminine frivolity. There were Madame's own ladies also, among them a quiet little mouse, good and virtuous, blushing at every word addressed to her. This was Louise de la Vallière, before long to be sandwiched into a place among the kingly loves—in intervals between Madame and the exuberant Montespan.

It was not long before a letter arrived at Saint-Cloud from Louis to "his beloved sister." So great is, he says, his impatience to see her again that he can scarcely restrain

himself from riding over. Upon the following day Madame set out for Fontainebleau, where it indeed appears as if all had been dull as ditchwater before her arrival. Her feeble husband, following in her train, soon had his expectations of an appanage raised to the highest pitch ; for no sooner had Henriette set foot at Fontainebleau than she became the goddess of the Palace, the fairy of the fountains, the nymph of the forests. When Philippe saw that Louis could not pass an hour without her society, that he arranged all in her honour—hunting-parties, balls, ballets—that his wife had in fact become the real Queen, he imagined that he governed also.

Madame was not sorry to be the goddess, the idol of the handsome, manly King. She let things take their course. Despite the natural frivolity of her seventeen summers, she had a brain capable of reflection ; this brain soon told her that, in her all-power upon the all-powerful King, she had just what was needed for the support of her brother upon the throne so recently restored by the death of Cromwell. Had not her bigoted mother—in her retreat in the gay society which haunted the nunnery of Chaillot—told her that God makes use of all means to attain His ends ? Should she not then make use of, while accepting, these giddy pleasures of the moment, employ the infatuation of her brother-in-law for the benefit of Charles in the present, the conversion of England in the future ?

Other ideas there were in the head of this young Princesse, who, disgusted at the nullity of her union with Philippe, could not but observe the temporary ill-health of the Queen and remember that Marie Thérèse came from a most unhealthy stock. What if, when the days for her confinement should arrive, she should not survive ? Monsieur, for the sake of his kingdom of Languedoc, would gladly consent to a divorce for the wife who was scarcely wife to him in ought but name—the throne would become hers !

Louis completely forgot his Spanish Queen—his sister-in-law occupied his every thought. Let the Queen, if she

liked, stick to the ridicule of her excessive Spanish etiquette —there was no such thing as etiquette in the forests of Fontainebleau! The mysterious aisles of the branches, the hidden grottoes in the rocks, the soft balmy air of summer, all breathed melody and romance around. For Henriette to share this mystery, to join in the melody of the birds and bees, to roam where the romance of youth proclaimed a kingdom of the fairies, such was now the will of the autocratic young Monarch. When, at nightfall, while Diana's rays shot slantwise through the leafy arches of the woods, he bade his sister-in-law, his dear sprightly cousin, to be his sole companion, could she refuse the King? No, indeed! Henriette was a good subject; she was, before all, submissive to her handsome cousin. Has she not herself told us, "I would have died sooner than disobey him in anything?" Objecting nothing—careless of opinion, of her own health—the obedient girl remained at times in the forest during those summer nights until the day had dawned ere Louis escorted her home to the Palace.

Had aught been wanting to spur the young King on during that month of June, 1661, it was there ready to hand in the rivalry of others. The Duke of Buckingham hung upon Madame's veriest word; the young Comte de Guiche likewise constituted himself her worshipper—he professed to have what he called an ethereal cult for her wit, her *esprit*. Guiche was of the same age as the King, and even better looking. Seeing that Henriette did not dislike him, nor his mode of worship, Louis, who could brook no obstacles, determined to break down all opposition, all rivalry; his pique and jealousy urged him on, until the crown was his alone—the laurels on his brow.

During that month of bliss at Fontainebleau, a month in which one pleasure, one delight, succeeded to the other, both Louis and Henriette learned news which caused them yet more pleasure and gratification. This was that Charles II., having acceded to the King's wishes, had accepted an enormous dowry which Louis gave, and married

by proxy the Portuguese Princess Catherine of Braganza. Thus there were new links between the Kings of France and England, links so fatal to the welfare of Great Britain, forged that summer at Fontainebleau, in the chains of love which bound the masterful Louis to the fairy Henriette.

While upon the subject of the secret alliance between Charles II. and Louis which, during her lifetime, Madame did so much to promote, we may here mention, although it may not be commonly known, that but a few years earlier Charles had been not a secret friend but the open enemy of Louis. In the year 1657 he and both his brothers, James, Duke of York, and Henry, Duke of Gloucester, were, under Condé, fighting against France with the Spanish army. Cromwell was then allied to France, and had sent a force of his Ironsides to assist Turenne. Since for a considerable time the Duke of York was the lieutenant of Turenne, this fact exemplifies, as in the case of Condé and Turenne, that no ill feeling resulted, in those days, from first serving on one side or under one General, and then on the other and against him.

It is strange, however, to read that "there was great consternation in Paris in June, 1658, when Dunkirk was taken from the Spaniards, because the Dukes of York and Gloucester were both in the battle on the Spanish side, and were supposed to be killed." At that time, not only their mother, the Queen Henrietta Maria, and her daughter, afterwards Madame, but also their elder sister Mary, the widowed Princess of Orange, were all present at the Court of France. And doubtless these ladies all received unbounded sympathy from their relatives, whose guests they were, and against whom the three Princes did not scruple to take up arms.

To our modern ideas it seems strange that little facts like these should not only be forgotten, but absolutely forgiven. But that even Condé was forgiven we know, and apparently both he and his brother Conti—whose insurrection during the Fronde under his sister's banner will be remembered—were just as securely installed in

France and as welcome about the Court as ever. The Prince de Conti was assuredly so, for when, in 1663, the King was ill with scarlet fever, it was to the humpbacked Prince that was assigned the infant Dauphin in case of the King's death. Condé does not seem to have visited the Court much about this time, probably more because he resented the treatment meted out to his friends at the peace of 1659 than because he felt himself in ill odour in the precincts of Royalty.

Indeed, at the end of July, 1662, after first escorting Queen Henrietta Maria as far as Beauvais, when she was on her way to England, Monsieur and Madame went to Chantilly to pay a visit to the man who, after the slaughter of the people of the Fronde at the Hôtel de Ville, went off to fight for years against his country at the head of the Spanish army. Here they were entertained—with hunting parties, theatrical performances, and other fêtes—by Condé on a scale of princely magnificence hardly paling before the glories of Fontainebleau. Yet that the Prince had been in thorough disgrace, both with the Court and people, for his traitorous conduct, so short a time before as 1659, will be well remembered. *Autres temps, autres mœurs!* was evidently a motto which was acted up to in the days of Louis XIV.

To return to Fontainebleau, whence, with Charles II. and Catherine of Braganza, we started off on this, we hope, pardonable digression. The results of the visit to that delightful summer residence were, for Madame, twofold. First, she found that she was *enceinte*; secondly, that she had aroused the indignation of the Queen-mother and the jealousy of the young Queen. The former, not content with upbraiding her son Louis upon his levity of conduct with his sister-in-law, strove, and with partial success, to arouse the jealousy of Monsieur. To set Louis now against the young Princesse whom he had so compromised by his indiscreet behaviour, Anne represented to him that with a person of her strength of character he ran the risk of finding himself ruled by her—at all events, that the

world at large would give him the credit of being under her thumb. To bring Madame back at the same time to a proper sense of what was right and fitting, her mother, the Queen of England, was requested to give her "a talking to." Since, to Henrietta Maria, Madame declared that there were no grounds for her maternal remonstrances, the Royal founder of the nunnery of Chaillot seems to have been contented with penning a letter from that distinguished convent to Madame de Motteville, a lady whose Memoirs have done much towards recording the exact history of those days. In this letter the Queen merely guardedly asked Madame de Motteville to keep an eye upon "one who loved her well."

As a result of this disturbance in the household, it was agreed upon between Louis and Henriette that they should both be more careful of *les convenances* in future. The better to effect this, it was suggested that, as a cloak to his future visits, the King should pretend to take an interest in the little mouse-like lady-in-waiting, the modest Louise de la Vallière. It was not a very honest arrangement for Madame to enter into—one to put the lamb in her fold into the way of the wolf; but it must be conceded that the seventeen-year-old shepherdess of the flock had no idea that the appetite of the wolf would so soon change. Unfortunately for the peace of mind of both shepherdess and lamb, this dainty morsel it was which soon put itself in the path of the vulpine marauder, offered up its dainty limbs to be torn in pieces. Deceived by the at first mock attentions of the handsome young King, Louise de la Vallière fell violently in love.

It was, so they say, a brutal jester, the Marquis de Roquelaure, who first made known the real state of things to Louis. One day, in Madame's own house, this chivalrous specimen of the French nobility, seizing the poor girl by the arm, accused her mockingly before the King of being in love with his Majesty. He challenged the lady-in-waiting to deny the fact. The modest child, for she was scarcely more, blushed, became confused, melted into tears, but

she could not deny the soft impeachment. Moved by her modesty, her innocence, flattered, too, that the young beauty should so unreservedly have surrendered to him her maiden love, the heart—or, since he had no heart, the senses—of the King caught fire. From that moment Louise de la Vallière was doomed. Louis had marked her for his own. The girl, however, was virtuous, with a virtue not of those days; her religion supported her. She loved the King, it was true—wildly, devotedly; but she would not consent to a crime, one, moreover, which would be an act of treason to her kind mistress, Madame. The resistance only made the pursuit more eager. Oblivious of all sense of honour towards Henriette—oblivious, too, of any respect for his young Queen, who was also about to become a mother—Louis now attacked the fort in earnest. He was for ever in the abode of Madame, and, while that neglected lady was now indeed perfectly innocent of all offence, upon her devoted head it was that the obloquy fell. Although she felt it bitterly to be accused, wrongfully, by the three Queens, of leading the King of France astray, to her honour be it said, while treating Louise not unkindly, that neither did Henriette send her away.

A month and a half elapsed before the poor girl's ruin was accomplished, and then it was by the agency of such finished scoundrels as the Marquis de Vardes, St. Aignan, and others, that she was delivered into the hands of the pitiless King.

It was the occasion of one of the greatest fêtes ever given in France, that arranged for the King by Fouquet at his magnificent Château de Vaux. There, in the trouble of the senses, the cerebral disturbance created by the glamour and witchery of the enchanting scene, the unmanly panders, who had drawn her to her doom, handed Louise de la Vallière over to the King, when she fell—a victim to the basest arts of seduction.

This fete was upon August 17th, 1661. It was at once the apotheosis and the ruin of Fouquet. His enemies, in addition to all the evil which was true that was known

of the Finance Minister, added a horrible lie. This was to persuade the King that Fouquet had had the insolence to attempt to become his rival in the good graces of Louise —that perhaps he was so already! Louis was furious with jealousy—Fouquet was doomed!

CHAPTER XIII

The Effects of Illuminism

1662—1663

The Finance Minister, Fouquet, was practically doomed upon the day of his famous fête, but although, upon his subsequent examination, the plans of a conspiracy for levying war upon the King came to light, these were not the cause of his downfall.

A picture in one of his drawing-rooms of a young woman with blonde hair was shown to the King, who was told that it was a portrait of Louise de la Vallière. This was the crime for which he really suffered when, three weeks later, the King arrested him at Nantes. Even then, so many and so great were his friends among all parties, he would have escaped unpunished had it not been for Colbert. His vindictive hatred of Fouquet had its effect upon the King, who sent him to a dungeon in Pignerol for the rest of his life. In the interim between the great fête at Vaux and his arrest, Fouquet had sold his place as Procureur-Général of the Parliament for a million *livres*, which sum he offered to the King. Louis had no fine feelings, no delicacy; he took the million and then arrested the giver.

Fouquet once arrested, Colbert had full sway. He instantly instituted proceedings against all financiers and accountants, all persons connected with them in town and country alike. A real reign of terror was instituted, some financiers were hanged, others deprived of all their

property—many persons connected with the Parliaments of Paris and the provinces being most severely and unjustly treated. Even moneys which had been rightly paid by the State, to the fathers and grandfathers of many of those selected for oppression, were now demanded back from them. The result was that Colbert was soon in funds for the King. Very many families connected with the magistracy were hopelessly ruined, while the Parliament was reduced to an even more servile position towards the King than it had been left in at the conclusion of the revolutions of the Fronde.

At this period of his career, while Louis showed but little personal interest in religion, or at all events paid but scant attention to his father-confessors, there was an enormous religious cabal existing in Paris. It was by means of this cabal that the King's confessor, Father Perrier, a dangerous man, managed to make the King feel the weight of his arm. It consisted of Anne of Austria and of many other great ladies as prime movers, and—while the Archbishop's palace was the nominal head centre—the salons of the Duchesses were the real plotting-places.

The chief aim of this devout conspiracy was the kidnapping of Huguenot children; for these charitable ladies, blindly zealous, performed strange acts of charity. The hôtel of the First President of the Parliament, Lamoignon by name, was the place the children were brought to, and the Duchesses d'Aiguillon and de Richelieu, with the wife of the Maréchal d'Albret, were three of the leaders of those who forcibly educated as Catholics the abducted children of Protestant parents.

The enormous fortunes of the ladies made all easy to them, and in the literary Intendant of Madame de Richelieu, Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, they found a fashionable leader in the nonsensical, mystical doctrines of the day. This Desmarets, although not in holy orders, was intimately allied with the Jesuits, who had, like him and his following at this period, plunged into the strange doctrines of Illuminism—called a little later Quietism and Molinism.

This romantic and imaginative religion taught—in the most equivocal phrases of love and passion—the tenets of self-annihilation. When that condition was attained, nothing was wrong—sin itself became permissible and sanctified by the grace which was within the sinner! The language of the cult was one of religious, romantic allegory—all ecstasies and visions—pious and tender at the same time. Mystic tenderness was the watchword of the cause, added to which were submission and self-annihilation.

Since these doctrines were not only very popular with the devout party and their many mundane Court friends, but also taught by Desmarets, through their directors, to the nuns in the convents, it became a serious matter for "his doves," as he called them. There had already been some serious religious scandals, owing to the rise of these dangerous doctrines in the previous reign, notably those concerning two spiritual directors. One of these, the famous Gauffridi, the nuns had accused of being the Prince of the Magicians; and both had, after a long course of immorality, been burned alive, owing to the accusations of witchcraft and sorcery brought against them by the hysterical recluses, whose heads had been turned. The books, however, of Desmarets, beautifully printed at the expense of the pious Cabal, helped greatly to increase existing evils in the ill-regulated convents throughout France.

It was not thirty years before that clever idiot Desmarets brought out his book the *Délices de l'Esprit* that the wily Capuchin, Father Joseph, had denounced to Richelieu the evils of the doctrines of these very Illuminists. Upon that occasion Richelieu had been desirous of striking a blow at the dangerous *illumination* in the convents. He found, however, upon enquiry, that the followers of the cult amounted to sixty thousand in Picardy alone. The numbers were too great, he did not know whom to strike—especially as there were degrees of culpability, some going farther than others. Some even, adversaries of the doctrines, yet made use of its flowery language, and thus lost themselves at times in "the bosky groves of the Spouse" or

" the bower of the Bride "—in the ambiguous, dangerous suavities of the Canticle of Canticles.

Meanwhile, the evil had gone on increasing, until in the reign of Louis XIV. we find a great contradiction in the State—religion and immoral doctrines going hand in hand. The King we find employing his great Minister Colbert almost in the capacity of a nurse, upon the birth of the first child of la Vallière. Tellier, another old and tried Minister, he sends upon an ignoble mission, to threaten the head lady of the Queen-mother's household because she has dared to put iron bars before the windows of the young ladies-of-honour. At the same time, with the countenance of the King, the authority of the Archbishop, we find Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin publishing—of the soul—that " if it knows how to annihilate itself, *no matter what it may do it sins no longer*; that, owing to its having become the habitation of God, even the inclinations of sensuality become sanctified."

Such, then, were the tenets of the religious Cabal which before long aimed its shafts at Madame; in the meantime it devoted itself to the gentle arts of religious persecution of a religious rival.

This was an unfortunate prophet—a visionary named Simon Morin. There could scarcely be any doubt as to the fact that the man, who imagined himself to be the Messiah, was crazy; he had indeed often been imprisoned, sometimes in the Bastille, sometimes in madhouses. Nevertheless, his character was singularly sweet and patient, his teachings uniformly pure. His followers consisted of a lady, Madame Malherbe, and two priests. The jealousy of Desmarets was aroused at the existence of any other prophet than himself. Employing treachery, he went to Morin, and, falling upon his breast, saluted him as the Messiah. The worthy Morin expressed his ideas openly to his imaginary disciple; they were unfortunately that, since he feared that in the heart of the King was the soul of Mazarin, he would not be likely to fulfil the works of God. Desmarets now cross-examined Madame Malherbe, when the unsus-

pecting lady answered, in reply to his inquiries, that "if the King would not be converted he ought to die—and that God would act by His Son."

With these words Desmarets went and accused Morin to the Jesuits and the Parliament, which Parliament had only six years previously declared the man to be a harmless lunatic. The Cabal, however, determined to burn Morin as an expiatory action, because the King was just then contemplating marching against the Pope into his territory of Avignon,the Pontiff having insulted Louis in the person of his ambassador. To burn Morin would, the Cabal thought, serve as a good example "to warn the *libertins*"—presumably the King's advisers, if not the King himself, were meant by this word *libertins*. Certainly it included Molière. Such was the power of the devout party that the Parliament could not stand before them: the condemnation of Morin was procured; he was condemned twice over—once upon December 20th, 1662, again upon March 13th, 1663, at which time the King was excessively ill with the measles.

Had it not been for the illness of Louis, it is extremely improbable if the cruel sentence would have been carried out. For, although his quarrel with the Pope was a bitter one, he had already sought to please the devout party by putting in force several cruel enactments against the Huguenots, such as depriving them of their Assemblies, making it impossible for them to recover debts from Catholics, and so on. Certainly, had he been under the influence of Madame during the period between the first condemnation of the unhappy Morin, and the second one, that kind-hearted woman, who had always the courage to speak out, would have persuaded the King to mercy.

He was, unfortunately, during the whole of the period of the persecution of Morin, more or less *brouillé* with his sister-in-law, who had objected, and with reason, to his continued visits under her roof to her lady-in-waiting. Henriette, upon one of these occasions, told the King plainly that she considered Louise de la Vallière as "*une fille à vous*," and requested him to take his mistress elsewhere.

This, however, for a time Louis declined to do. The affair, to be mentioned presently, of the Comte de Guiche, had also set a barrier between the King and Madame. La Vallière was too weak a character, loving, trembling, ever suffering acutely from jealousy, to have any effect upon the King other than the pleasure which he derived from a plaything, one whose feelings he could amuse himself with by harrowing, an unhappy girl whom he could torture through her shame. Moreover, since she became in weak health, her also he neglected, in favour of Mademoiselle de la Mothe, a young lady whom the worthless Olympia Mancini, now Comtesse de Soissons, had placed in his way.

There was, therefore, no one left to influence him outside the Cabal, no one to represent to him that it was nearly half a century since the last of the *esprits forts*, Vanini, had been burned at the stake, no one to say that such horrors belonged to the Middle Ages, of which the execution of Vanini had been but the belated survival.

The sentence, therefore, which had been first pronounced upon December 20th, 1662, when confirmed, during the King's illness three months later, was as barbarous as any that had disgraced the annals of France from the earliest times. It was that Simon Morin should be burned alive, the two priests his disciples sent to the galleys for life, and the poor lady, Madame Malherbe, be subjected to the greatest indignity which the brutes could inflict upon her. This was that this unhappy woman should be brought on to the scaffold naked, branded with a hot iron, and then publicly flogged! In vain did she appeal for mercy—the cruel sentence was carried out.

As for Morin, if a man whose brain was turned, he showed a superiority over his bigoted executioners worthy of any martyr who ever died to save his soul. He said to his judges, "I shall not ask of God that He take this cup from me." The brutal President Lamoignon, the kidnapper of innocent children, sought to insult and taunt the demented man in his last moments, saying to him, "It was not written that the new Messiah would suffer by fire!"

Hereupon, in his answer, the man about to die displayed a readiness of wit rarely excelled by those in possession of all their faculties. The reply he made was, "Lord! Thou hast tried me in the fire, but Thou hast found no fault in me."

The terrible execution was carried out upon March 14th, 1663. In the meantime, there was a man about the Court who, of all those who contrived to become well hated, first by the devout party, secondly by the nobles, certainly by his own action brought that hatred upon himself. He it was who, after the death of Morin, stood in a position of the greatest danger, from which he was rescued by the recovery of the King. This man was Jean Baptiste Poquelin, known as Molière, the King's *valet de chambre tapissier*, the famous poet and dramatist. Molière's comedy *L'École des femmes* was played for the first time upon December 26th, 1662, just six days after the first condemnation of Morin, and not only was it received rapturously, but the public never got tired of the piece. In this comedy Molière had greatly offended the Cabal, just then triumphing in its success over *les libertins*, since he had dared to make light of the terrors of hell.

During the illness of the King a great number of the Court party—time-servers, swayed by every wind that blows—had inclined towards the Cabal, and, as a proof of their adhesion to the devout party, had joined in railing at the impious piece, attacking it for its want of elegance, its coarseness and want of style. "*Les Marquis*" of the Court, de Vardes, Lauzun, the Comte de Guiche, the Prince de Marsillac, la Feuillade, all the fops and libertines upon whom Molière was soon to revenge himself, with the King's connivance, were unanimous in finding their elegance affected, in expressing their disgust of the frank, plain-spoken, *bourgeois* language of the play. This, it so happened, was dedicated to Madame Henriette, the Duchesse d'Orléans, in a very serious and carefully penned dedication by the poet.

In attacking Molière, the Court therefore were joining

themselves to *les dévots* in attacking Madame. Before we show in what manner the cruellest blow was aimed at Molière, it becomes necessary to anticipate and to detail some of the as yet unrecorded events in the affairs of Madame.

At the time of her marriage, the principal favourite of her infamous husband was the Comte de Guiche, son of the Maréchal de Grammont. This handsome young man soon neglected the husband for the young wife, of whom he became deeply enamoured, moreover, made no secret of his passion. Monsieur taking offence, Guiche left the Court for a time, his sister, Henriette's confidante and friend, the Princesse de Monaco, doing so shortly after her brother.

In his absence Guiche frequently wrote to Madame, the letters being taken to her by her lady, Mademoiselle Montalais, a girl of light behaviour, who subsequently prevailed upon her mistress to see the Comte in secret. In the meantime his letters, which were meant to make the eighteen-year-old Duchesse laugh, were most incautious, for they made fun of Monsieur ; still worse, they made fun of the King, just now so occupied with la Vallière that he had forgotten Madame. At length, one morning, the imprudent young lady-in-waiting ushered into the bedroom of the young Princesse a woman dressed as a fortune-teller. This sorceress was no other than the Comte de Guiche in disguise.

Madame was ill at this time, in a condition, in fact, too low to give countenance to any of the reports of evil which got about in connection with this affair. It soon got to the ears of the King, through la Vallière, to whom Montalais had told the secret. Louise, however, did not tell the King willingly ; indeed, she ran away to a convent at first, rather than tell him what she knew. When Louis had extracted the required avowal, he flew to Madame and reproached her bitterly, ill as she was, and insisted upon the instant dismissal of Mademoiselle Montalais. Guiche was sent away from the Court at once, and went off to the wars,

under the Emperor, leaving a miserable woman behind him. His vanity it was, in seeking for his own glorification in such a brilliant love affair, which had been, more than his heart, concerned in the matter, for he was one of the vainest of men, although brave.

CHAPTER XIV

The Scoundrel De Vardes and Molière

1663—1665

One of the most debauched men in a debauched Court was the Marquis de Vardes. When Louis was tired of his intrigue with Olympia Mancini, Comtesse de Soissons, he told Vardes to take her off his hands—that they would suit each other admirably. At the time that Madame was having her love affair with the Comte de Guiche, the intrigue between Olympia and Vardes was still going on; but Vardes also was a *soupirant* after Madame. There were others who sighed in vain for the love of the lady—d'Armagnac of the Guise family for one, the Prince de Marsillac, the son of the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, for another, the Duke of Buckingham for a third. But, of all those who sighed for the favours of the young Princesse, none was so thorough, so unscrupulous a blackguard as de Vardes. Seeing what the Court of Louis XIV. was, from the monarch downwards, this seems a great deal to say. Perhaps, therefore, the remark ought to be qualified by the words—except the King! If the Comte de Guiche were vain, the vanity of de Vardes was pitiless and ferocious. Success in love meant, for him, to humiliate and drive to despair; it was the way in which he passed his life. Formerly he had ruined, destroyed, and broken for ever the lovely Madame de Roquelaure, who never lifted her head again. Many years later he ruined a young lady of twenty, not half his age, who died of despair. A play

was made of this affair, which ought to have caused his name to be detested, but which had the contrary effect. Madame de Sévigné wept at the play, but laughs at herself for doing so, while quite unable to repress her admiration for such a charming scoundrel!

Unfortunately for Madame, it was not with the clever, seductive scoundrel alone that she had to deal when, jealous of de Guiche, he sought to replace him; but also with his mistress, that female scoundrel Olympia—for the pair were in league.

When the King left Madame for Louise de la Vallière, she sought consolation with Olympia, who had been left like herself before she accepted that black sheep Vardes. Now Vardes and Olympia together determined to ruin la Vallière with the King, and, above all, to abase the first Princesse of the day, the kind-hearted Madame. Her they sought to make absolutely impossible in the future. In the meantime they vainly endeavoured to make her harsh to Louise.

When Guiche had gone off to the wars, this precious couple soon got Madame into their toils. Simulating the greatest sympathy and devotion for her, the unfortunate result was that Vardes contrived to obtain from Madame the foolish letters written by Guiche. Then, having Henriette in their power by the fact of holding these letters, they made of her an accomplice, when they wrote, under her eyes, an anonymous letter to the Queen, giving a great many interesting details in the life of the King. When, by chance, instead of into his wife's hands, it was into those of Louis that this letter fell, Vardes was the first man he took it to, to ask him what he thought about it. The Marquis mentioned one or two persons—enemies of his own—as the probable authors of the infamous letter, and they were promptly driven away from the Court. At the same time, the rascally Marquis took care to instil into the King's mind the idea that Madame did not love him in the least, that all she thought about or cared for was her brother Charles II., whom she was instigating against

France and its Monarch. Already had Vardes told the inexperienced Madame that the King did not love her, and that her real security lay in the support of her brother Charles! Thus, by every means in his power, did this wretch, already no longer a young man, try to injure this girl and isolate her from all her friends. Olympia, his charming accomplice, did the same, and with success. Now, having accomplished their design and left the Duchesse d'Orléans friendless, the devilish de Vardes put on the screw with the letters. He threatened to show them to the King, whom they mocked at. In an agony of fear, Madame begged and prayed—she would kill herself rather than be exposed.

"Very well then, Madame; you can have them—upon my terms," said the polished villain.

"Your terms!—oh! I will consent to any terms. What are they? I will agree."

"Come to me in the house of the Comtesse de Soissons; I will tell you there before I deliver you up the letters."

From the day that Madame went to the house of Olympia, where she duly received the packet of letters, the vaunting coxcomb de Vardes behaved with a singular insolence towards this young Princesse. From which it is to be conjectured that the terms were hard, although Madame's own historian, Madame de la Fayette, breaks off the story without giving the actual conditions of the surrender.

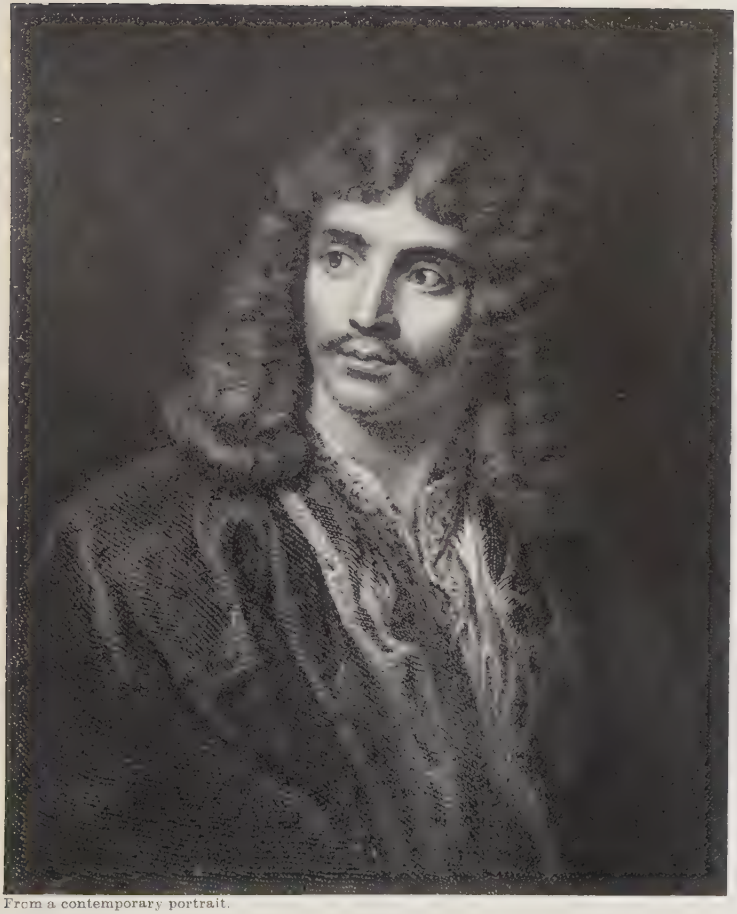
This kind and sweet-hearted girl was now indeed made to suffer, as Vardes publicly made it known that he could dispose of her as he liked. To exemplify this: he gave her a rendezvous in the home of gallantry, the fashionable parlour of the nunnery of Chaillot, a place much used in those days, under the cloak of visiting the nuns, for meetings between ladies and their lovers. Here he allowed Madame to stay, waiting for him—while, not deigning to keep his appointment—he went about the Court telling his friends where she was to be found.

Olympia and he had accomplished their object. With

a worthless husband, who cared only for his *mignons*, with the King's favour withdrawn, with her name bandied about in connection with that of first one disreputable rip and then another, low indeed had sunk the name of this Royal Princess of England, daughter of King Charles I. !

In March, 1663, a few days after the terrible execution of Morin and the public flogging of Madame Malherbe, the King rose from his bed of sickness, young, strong, as full of ideas of gallantry as ever.

At this time his favourite, valet de chambre and playwriter, Molière, was having rather a bad time of it, between the members of the Cabal and the nobles, for the latter chimed in with the devout Illuminists and kidnappers to do worse than subject him to ordinary abuse. The playwright found *les marquis* insupportable; he longed to be able to punish his persecutors, who publicly branded him as guilty of the crime of incest, accusing him of having married his own daughter, in the person of the young Armande Béjart. It is true they had something to go upon, as the playwright and comedian had lived formerly with Madeleine Béjart, the girl's mother, an actress of light character. Although Molière had brought the young girl up until the age of sixteen, it seems to have been always understood, until he married her, that the child was the daughter of the Comte de Modène, and that it was only on account of the neglect shown to the young Armande, by her worthless mother, that the good-hearted poet had interested himself in her maintenance and education for the theatre. When he had already been married to Armande for some months, it was a certain actor named Montfleury, whom Molière had offended, who first launched the terrible calumny. It was one of which the Cabal were only too glad to lay hold and use as a weapon of destruction. Molière's offence had been that, in a piece called *L'Impromptu de Versailles*, he had criticised the bombastic style of declamation used by Montfleury. The revenge which the actor took proves that if the pen is sharper than the sword, the tongue cuts deeper than either one or the other.



From a contemporary portrait.

MOLIÈRE
(Jean-Baptiste Poquelin).

It must be confessed that the action of Molière, even if prompted at first by the cupidity of the mother, who, it is said, hoped to make of his young wife nothing but his heiress, was one which would be considered immoral nowadays. In the time of Louis XIV., however, they were not so particular, and, seeing the relations which there are very good grounds for believing existed between the King and his sister-in-law, it was not likely that either of them would think any the worse of the actor and dramatist on account of the irregularity of the strange union which he had contracted. Accordingly, neither the one nor the other withdrew their patronage from Molière; more than that, the King afforded him his protection in a marked manner. Molière, with the King's consent, if not his order, brought out the piece, which was his vengeance on *les marquis*; and there was the more reason for this owing to the fact that Louis had just discovered one of them, the Marquis de Lauzun, becoming insupportable to himself. Lauzun had the temerity to interest himself in a lady whom heretofore Louis had imagined to have reserved her smiles for himself alone. When the young monarch, in an unpremeditated scene, found Lauzun in possession of the field of battle, he sent him to the Bastille with the jest that it was "*Pour avoir plu aux dames!*"

Molière's *Critique de l'École des femmes* treated the marquises in a fashion of scathing ridicule. In the prologue, he remarks, "Nowadays it is the marquis who is the buffoon of comedy. As in the old comedies it is the lackey who is the fool of the piece, to make the people laugh, now what we want for a tom-fool is a marquis!"

In the piece, his young wife Armande played the rôle of Elise; when the Cabal, furious against the King and Madame, to whom Louis was once more becoming attracted and attached, determined to strike at both through the husband of Elise. Accordingly, they stirred up the people of the royal household to refuse to consort or eat with him whom they branded as incestuous.

The King's reply to this was to have Molière's meals

thenceforward served in his own bed-chamber. He allowed him a regular income, and, the more to irritate the devout party, caused a fowl to be served nightly in his Royal apartment—*in case* the actor and author should be hungry. This dish was called Molière's "*en cas*." Never did the King show greater contempt for his Court than at this time; never did he place himself more independently above every one, more boldly show his disregard for public opinion, than in the days when he permitted his valet de chambre to trample, in his terrible flagellation, so triumphantly over the prostrate forms of the nobles of the Court! Madame, too, was avenged; all her former lovers, or make-believe lovers, were branded by the cruel sarcasms of the playwright.

The return of the King to Madame at this date was caused by two reasons: first, the ill-health of Louise de la Vallière; secondly, the fact that Henriette had definitely broken with the Comte de Guiche, from whom she refused to receive any letters.

Louis, delighted at his sister-in-law's consideration for his wishes, gave to her once more all his heart and all his confidence. In the month of October, 1663, Henriette was once more almost Queen. She had previously, on March 27th, 1662, given birth to a little princess, upon whose appearance the King had evinced the greatest delight; but the miserable health which she had for a time suffered from had now all passed away. Thus the King, who never could bear sick people, was all the more delighted with her society. Had Madame but been blessed with good health, it seems indeed probable that she would never more have had to fear any rivals, or lost her ascendancy over the King, for she was the one intelligent, well-read woman in whose society he was able to take intellectual pleasure. Her conversation and companionship did him good—educated him, in fact; and, while Louis never could bear *esprit* in other women, he always appreciated it in his brilliant sister-in-law. Moreover, there was the additional link between them that Henriette formed the only

trustworthy go-between with her brother Charles II. Unfortunately, there was no more miserable creature on the face of this earth than Madame whenever she was likely to become a mother, and throughout the greater part of the ensuing year the poor creature suffered dreadfully once more both in health and personal appearance.

Louise de la Vallière at this time was greatly neglected by the King. When, on December 19th, 1663, she brought a child into the world, Louis gave to his offspring no public recognition, such as he subsequently accorded to the children of Madame de Montespan when they successively made their appearance. On the contrary, the Minister Colbert was employed to smuggle the newly born infant of the neglected love of last year in a hugger-mugger way into a pavilion in the garden, whence he was again employed to convey it to a secret baptism, under a false name, in a small church in the Rue Saint-Denis.

The birth, therefore, hardly attracted any attention; and now, to give the Cabal something more to think about, Louis prepared in earnest to make war upon the Pope. Having got an army ready, he threatened to put it in motion, unless by February 15th the Pontiff should have acceded to all the demands of Louis, and they were onerous and humiliating in the extreme. Nevertheless, upon February 12th, 1664, the most complete surrender came from the Holy Chair, to the desolation of the Cabal but the glorification of the King, who was now indeed his own Pope.

To complete his triumph and that of Madame, upon the 28th of the same month Louis and Henriette held at the font for baptism the infant child of Molière and Armande Béjart. With the King and Madame as godfather and godmother to the child of the marriage, who now was there that dared to brand the union itself as incestuous?

Meanwhile, the triumphant Molière was preparing another coup. While the Papal Nuncio was in Paris, he humbly laid before him the draft of his famous piece *Tartufe*. A blow at religious hypocrisy, this piece was aimed directly

at the lay spiritual directors of the Cabal—that is to say, it was intended to unmask Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin, the Intendant of Madame de Richelieu. The Papal Legate having given his approbation, Molière was now able to go ahead; none dare say a word against the piece without running the risk of being suspected of being bad people, imbued with the cult of Illuminism—for Molière makes his Tartufe an *Illuminé*, and makes him say to his valet Laurent, "May God illuminate you!"

While Molière was bringing out *Tartufe*, and at the same time preparing a piece called *La Princesse d'Élide*, which was intended for the glorification of Madame, a counter-blow was being prepared by the Cabal, which was to have the result of completely altering the effect of the production of this latter piece. At this very period also a treacherous plot for the destruction of Madame was being laid by the rascal de Vardes.

The result of the conspiracy of the Cabal, in which the people of the Queen-mother took an active part, was to deprive Madame of the honours of *La Princesse d'Élide* in favour of Louise de la Vallière.

Owing to the hatred of the Queen-mother and the rest for the King's sister-in-law, Louis was persuaded to have the first representation of the play given at Versailles, upon May 8th, 1664. The inoffensive mistress, once the humble lady-in-waiting of Madame, it was who was now, so to speak, enthroned, and with the approbation of the whole Court. The Princesse, fille des Rois of the play, intended for Henriette by the author, now seemed symbolical of Louise, whom the Cabal had installed in the place of the real Princesse. A few days later, the first acts of *Tartufe* were given, when the King accepted the piece without disapprobation. The President Lamoignon, the friend of Desmarets, who had been the principal agent in the burning of the unhappy Morin, was naturally anxious that the public showing-up of Desmarets as Tartufe should not take place. The same agencies which had served for the enthronement of la Vallière were set to work, with

the successful result that Louis gave orders that the piece was not to be performed in public—at all events until finished.

The marquises who had been branded in the *Critique de l'École des femmes*, were *en déroute*. Lauzun was in prison and la Feuillade had already fled ; de Vardes felt his turn was coming.

The flight of la Feuillade had taken place after an act of revenge which he took upon Molière after a performance of the *Critique*. Meeting the author and actor, he embraced him violently, while repeating the catchword of the piece, "*Tarte à la crème, Molière—tarte à la crème!*" In saying these words, he contrived to rub Molière's face painfully with the diamond buttons in his shirt-front. Not waiting for the King's anger to be visited upon him, la Feuillade went off to join the armies of the Emperor, whither several others had already preceded him.

Fearing that he would have to follow, de Vardes, acting in unison with the great Cabal, wrote to Guiche and told him that if he would write to his care, he would see that his letter should reach Madame. The absent and innocent Comte fell into the trap ; but no sooner had de Vardes received the letter than he took it to the King. After having done this, he, Mephisto-like, took it to tempt Madame. She, however, saw the snare, and absolutely refused to accept the letter.

Hereupon the scoundrel wept, threw himself at her feet, vowing with crocodile tears that he was sincere ; imploring her to receive the letter—in order that, by its reception, Madame should weave a rope for her own hanging.

In his rage, says Madame's own chronicler, Madame de la Fayette, de Vardes uttered a horrible insult. There was a certain *mignon* of Monsieur—of whom we shall hear more later—the Chevalier de Lorraine. This man was at the time attempting to carry on an intrigue with one of Madame's ladies. To him, Vardes remarked brutally and cynically, "Why take so much trouble with the servant ?

Go straight for the mistress; you will find the road far easier!"

Fortunately Madame, always hitherto forgiving, did not put up with this insult, which, had she accepted it, would have lost her for ever with the King, so greatly would she have been lowered in his eyes. Louis would himself have been afraid of the reflection of the ridicule which would have fallen upon Madame, and have deserted her accordingly—for ever. However, she went straight to the King, with the result that he came to her place, Villers-Cotterets, with Molière, and had *Tartufe* performed a second time there in his presence and that of Madame.

This action brought even the Queen-mother to her knees. The religious Cabal, seeing that the Court Cabal, present with the King, had failed, took desperate measures. Anne wrote to her son at Villers-Cotterets, that she was very ill, begging him to come to her at once.

Upon his arrival, pushed to it by the ladies of high piety and virtue, the Queen-mother offered to receive la Vallière, and to receive her, moreover, kindly. Even the young Spanish Queen, the King's wife, had been brought to approve of this extraordinary measure. Despite the amiability of the Queens, the illness of his mother, the presence of la Vallière, Louis felt too strongly the attraction of his sister-in-law to remain. To the despair of the Cabal, he returned to Henriette.

Shortly after this Molière produced his play *Don Juan*, which dealt the final blow at de Vardes, now undergoing a very easy confinement in the Bastille, a blow, too, at the other marquises of the Court. Louis, who took the hint, had de Vardes spirited away one night and buried in a damp and dismal dungeon, where he remained for eighteen months, after which the King sent him to a fever-stricken little fortress called Aigues-Mortes, where he left him for twenty years!

It was upon March 30th, 1665, that this scoundrel was first imprisoned, and before that the King had extracted from Olympia Mancini the full confession of their

mutual action in the matter of the infamous anonymous letter sent to the young Queen. The result was that the libertine Comtesse de Soissons was also banished for awhile from Paris; and her salon, which had been the permanent hatching-place of plots and immoralities, was closed for ever. Thus, for the time at least, justice was done; but the enemies of the unhappy Henriette d'Orléans were only to cease their plottings with her life.

CHAPTER XV

Colbert and the Barbarities of the Nobles

1664 AND LATER

COLBERT, the great minister of Louis XIV., may be said to have been possessed by the fury of improvement, the craze of reform. He commenced by the reform of the financiers and accountants, not caring much what were the methods employed to make them disgorge money for the use of the King. He next paid attention to the finance of the towns: protecting them from following their old methods of ruining themselves in their own way, he forbade the corporations to borrow money. He reformed the judges; he reformed the law. Improvements he sought to establish everywhere: industries, commerce, the fleet, the system of colonisation—all of these required care and fostering, which they readily obtained from him. The fleet and system of colonisation Colbert may perhaps be said rather to have created than improved; still, their creation was an improvement in the affairs of the country over which he ruled, and, as such, precious to the minister who laboured so hard to make a success of one and the other.

In the year 1664 Colbert commenced to be inspired with terror at the task which he had set himself when, having thrown Fouquet to the ground, he had established himself upon his ruins; this task being—while doing everything himself—to persuade the young King that he it was who did all things, created all things, was powerful enough to accomplish all things.

In that year the extravagant fêtes given by Louis at Versailles, which may be said to have inaugurated Versailles as his residence, were glorious, triumphant—and cost an immense amount of money. The expense of this great *féerie*, which lasted seven days, appalled Colbert. Although la Vallière was nominally the Queen of the festival, its real hero was the King; he was celebrating himself—his own divinity. It was a divinity of which the Empyrean was henceforward to be Versailles. In vain had it been that Colbert, in his efforts to avert this result, had transformed himself into a mason, augmented the Tuileries, almost rebuilt the Louvre. Fearing the creation of the enormous palace, upon the erection of which he knew that Louis had set his heart, Colbert had even gone so far as to write a pamphlet against Versailles in favour of the Louvre. All opposition was useless! The King, who was already residing at Saint-Germain or Fontainebleau in preference to Paris, now caused in earnest to be commenced the works for the terrible and costly erections, the gardens and systems of waterworks against which the Minister had been so anxious to dissuade his master. In 1666, upon the death of his mother, Louis left the capital; in 1670 all works on the palaces in Paris were arrested, from that time forward Versailles absorbed everything.

The fact was that Louis hated the city; Paris—devout, parliamentary, mocking, full of cabals—was hateful to him under all these aspects. The people there rebelled against the gorgeous costumes of the Court, the flowing wigs, the hats covered with plumes, the ribbons, the laces. The rebellious *bourgeoisie* persisted in wearing, as if in reproach to the King and nobility, the simple garb of the time of Louis XIII., the black dress of Puritan England. While Brussels, Germany, Italy, all in succession followed the fashions of the French Court, the people of Paris alone irreverently mocked and made fun of them. Such irreligion was not to be countenanced; therefore Versailles had to be built and Colbert had to find the many millions required for the building. It was an innovation which

did not come under any of the heads in the Minister's list of his reforms and improvements. In the year 1662, however, he was still able to dispose of the King, and, with the view of reforming France—nobility, priesthood, magistracy alike, all of whom combined to oppress the poor and arrest the growth of trade—Colbert formed a great design.

This was to march the King in state, as the only origin and fount of the law, throughout the kingdom from one end to the other. The King it was to be who, while all the Parliament and judicial courts were suspended, would, in person, administer justice and, with a strong hand, remedy existing abuses. Abuses there were in abundance, in spite of the Intendants, the institution of Richelieu, whom Colbert had placed everywhere in the position of supreme administrators. For these men—dictators, placed to arrest everywhere the abuses of the finance, of the judicature, to superintend the movement of troops, or municipal and provincial administration, even at times to act as judges—were, in spite of all their powers, not to be relied on. The very classes from which they were drawn were those of the judges and finance agents, with whom therefore they were often in sympathy and collusion. Under Colbert, how great was their power is illustrated by the affair of Fargues, which startled all France.

This Fargues was an ex-Frondeur who, although culpable of treason and various excesses, had nevertheless been amnestied with all others when the Fronde was ended and the King entered Paris, years ago! He lived forgotten, but in good style, in the country, where some courtiers, who had lost themselves hunting, were found and hospitably entertained by him. Thinking to do their kind host a good turn, the nobles, upon their return to the Court, praised his hospitality to the King.

"What?" exclaimed Louis indignantly, "does Fargues still live? and so close to here?"

Louis and the Queen-mother sent for Lamoignon, the strong man of the devout Cabal. He soon agreed to

find a crime to try Fargues upon, when promised that the goods and money of the Frondeur should be his reward. Lamoignon handed over Fargues to the tender mercies of the Intendant Marchault. This Intendant, presiding for the trial over some judges of the town of Abbeville, condemned to death the unhappy man—who was guilty of no recent crime except that of being Fargues!

When Colbert proposed to take the King round, to see something of that France of which he knew so little, Louis raised no objections, indeed rather fancied the idea. The Court, the Parliament, the Finance, and the Cabal, however, all combined to exert underhand pressure, in one manner or another, to prevent Louis from seeing personally what was going on in the provinces of his kingdom. Colbert was therefore obliged to fall back upon the simple device of establishing Royal Parliamentary Commissions to go and inquire into the abuses. These commissions were to hold sittings to be called The Great Days (*Les Grands Jours*).

Plenty of warning was given in advance of the institution of the Great Days throughout the centre of the kingdom, the natural result of which warning was, that those who had most to fear cleared out in time to avoid judgment.

In many places in Auvergne, Forez, Bourbonnais, and other provinces, the state of disregard of any law—save that of might being right—resembled the worst times of the Middle Ages. In one place a festive *seigneur*, after various assassinations, took it into his head to wall up a living man in a cupboard, in a bent position, for months. Unable to either stand up or lie down, the wretched being was compelled to remain thus for the amusement of his lord—until he died! Another adopted a different form of amusement: this was to make his little ten-year-old son kill his victim by slow blows with a penknife! Violation was everywhere rife, the tortures and outraged modesty of the unhappy women being looked upon as a jest by the savage and brutal nobles.

The *droit de seigneur*, upon the occasion of the marriage of a daughter of the tenantry or peasantry, was rigidly enforced. Upon the day of her wedding the unfortunate bride was compelled to attend, trembling, to await the pleasure of the lord of the manor. Sometimes these disgusting and barbarous "rights" were waived for a substantial ransom, the peasants being well squeezed to save the bride. According to the laws of Béarn, the eldest born of every peasant was accounted the son of the *seigneur*, "for," said the law, "he may be his offspring."

Not content with their own savage customs, the country nobles did not scruple to wage war upon the King's men and messengers. A Royal command was looked upon as an outrage only to be wiped out in blood.

An example of this was seen in the province of Forez. When three sheriff's officers dared to present themselves before a certain *marquis*, he drove them away from his castle. Then, mounting his horse, he pursued them to an inn, where he killed all three in their beds! Yet for ten years longer was this miscreant able to reign as king in his district.

The poor peasantry, as may be imagined, formed great hopes from the coming of the *Grands Jours*. They commenced in advance to give themselves airs with their lords: one man even threatened his lord with death, when the King's men came, if he did not pick up his hat for him, after the lord had thrown it from his head to the ground. The *seigneur*, who had more weighty crimes on his conscience, obeyed the peasant. The hopes of the poor were, however, more often than not disappointed. One *seigneur* and several priests who had committed murders were executed, but, although there were many other condemnations, they were only on paper and often not recorded.

In the absence of the criminals, their wives and daughters made love to and regaled with good cheer the members of the various commissions, who—merely diverting themselves immensely in the castles of the nobles they had been sent to punish—returned to Paris three months later, after

having been bought off by the kisses of the ladies from the too rigid performance of their duty.

When the war broke out later, the judgments of the King proved to be of so little import that even those guilty of the most horrible crimes came and entered the King's armies, in which some rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General.

From the futile result of these Royal commissions Colbert learned a lesson. It was that the two classes of nobility—that created by an hereditary magistracy and that of the wearers of the sword—had become too closely allied, by mutual interests, since the days of the Fronde, for him to be able to rely upon the Parliamentary ranks to redress abuses. For even the most revolutionary members of the Fronde, mixed up with the men of Condé, had taken to the habits and vices of the Court. They too now lived a life of idle gallantry, and neglected their duties in the Parliament—where the judgments they gave were dictated by their noble friends or by the ladies who had won their heart at the moment.

The Minister had therefore nothing left him but to trust once more to his Intendants. However, he took the precaution of moving them about often from one district to another, to prevent them from becoming too much under the influence of the nobility, the priesthood, or the men of finance in any one particular set of surroundings.

CHAPTER XVI

The Infamous Treacheries of Louis

1661—1667

When Louis took the government into his own hands, he practically defied all Europe; his policy showed a violent deviation from anything that had gone before. At first, this defiance went unpunished, but did so while sowing everywhere the seeds of profound hatred, in creating for himself infinite obstacles for the future, in preparing, from bravado to bravado, additional future shame for himself and the nation alike. In addition, this policy of braggadocio led directly to the bankruptcy of France and to such a condition of poverty and shrinkage that more than a century was required for the re-establishment of the country.

Louis XIV. was the son-in-law of Philip IV. of Spain, having married Marie Thérèse, that King's daughter by his first wife. Despite that fact, even less than a year after his marriage, we find him treating the father of his young bride more as an enemy than a relation, since, by giving to Portugal the able General, Schomberg, with a staff of French officers, he armed her against Spain. In addition to this aggressive action, Louis was secretly aiding Charles II. of England to send troops to Portugal to fight against his father-in-law.

Spain—once so great, so noble—was very weak at this time. Since, through his wife and heir, Louis looked forward already to the day when he might obtain the

Spanish succession for the Bourbon line, would it not now have been a brotherly action to have assisted, rather than have aided in dismembering the country between him and which there merely stood the life of a weakling boy? Most assuredly! but humiliation rather than help was the policy of Louis. He humiliated Philip in London, where, although Mazarin had stipulated for the equality of the two crowns, Louis insisted—even by armed force in the streets of the English capital—upon the supremacy of his own ambassador.

Readers of Pepys will find an account of the battle between the French and Spanish Ambassadors and their suites, in which, the London mob aiding the Spaniards, the French were routed—when the Spanish Ambassador in his carriage took precedence next to the British King. For this question of etiquette Louis threatened his father-in-law with war, when the older King had humbly to send his excuses to his twenty-three-year-old son-in-law.

At the same time that he was carrying out this policy of outrage, Louis was demanding from the friendship of Philip that he should annul the renunciation to the Spanish crown which Marie Thérèse had made at the time of her marriage.

In continuance of his double action—while taking the title of Duke of Milan, which belonged to Spain, while detaching Holland and the Swiss from Spain and asking them not to protect the Spanish Low Countries—Louis requests of his father-in-law the gift of Franche-Comté. He tells Philip that, in return for Franche-Comté, he will aid him against Holland and against England. By menaces and corruption, first on one side, then on the other, Louis does his best to show that neither the word nor the friendship of France are of the slightest value.

Soon, by his imprudences and overbearing actions, Louis contrived to alienate the feelings of very substantial French parties both in England and in Holland.

In the year 1661, when the marriage of the English Princess to the Duc d'Orléans should have proved the

augur of closer relations between England and France, Louis thought fit to demand that the flag of England should be always struck at sea to the vessels of France. Great Britain possessed at that time a navy only equalled by that of Holland; France had none as yet. No wonder that the English nation was provoked, when a violent letter from Louis XIV. insisted upon compliance with this humiliating request! Even the weak-kneed Charles II., who, entirely against the will of his nation, sold Dunkirk to France, made a stand in the matter of the flag. He wrote to his sister Madame, at the French Court, that he would never submit to the British flag being lowered before that of any other nation.

In Holland the head of the party inclined to France was a man who had the real interests of his country at heart. This was Jan de Witt, who—foreseeing the coming danger to the Republic of the young William of Orange, the nephew of the King of England—had thrown in his lot with France, to the extent of promising that, in the event of a war, he would not defend the Spanish Low Countries against Louis. Mazarin had, in return, reduced greatly the rates upon Dutch ships entering French ports—a great advantage both to Holland and to the people of France, who, in exchange for their own wine and spirits, obtained all their cloth stuffs and linens from the Republic. The reward which Louis gave to Holland for her alliance was to place a tremendous tax upon these commodities, the result of which was to ruin a great number of the industrial population of Holland.

At this time Philip IV., who was very ill and expected shortly to die, hoped to secure a strong protector for his little son by yielding to the demands of his son-in-law. Even while Philip gave way, Louis treated him roughly, and would not allow him to put in a state of repair his fortresses in the Low Countries. Nevertheless, he also negotiated with his father-in-law a treaty for the combined invasion of that England whose King, in his friendship, had just sold him Dunkirk!

Was there ever such all-round duplicity! All the time the proposed ruin of Spain was progressing, and the blow fell when, in 1665, Schomberg—with his French officers of a Portuguese army—inflicted a crushing defeat upon the army of Philip at Badajoz. This was the last straw! The shock killed the father-in-law of the man who had so treacherously planned it.

Thus the infant Charles and his German mother were left, with no protection but the Austrian Jesuit Nithard between themselves and the ambitions of the child's blood-relation and brother-in-law. The Jesuit was the confessor and counsellor of the Spanish Queen; but he did not know what counsel now to give, for fear of irritating Louis. Therefore, no measures were taken for the defence of the two-year-old boy from his natural protector, the King of France.

If anything more were wanting to show the baseness of the character of Louis, it could be supplied from the King's duplicity upon the death of Philip IV. He commenced by reassuring Nithard and the Queen of Spain. "The young King," he said, "is my brother-in-law—I will protect him. I will give him all the marks of tenderness and friendship in my power."

With these lying words upon his lips, the *tender* King prepared for war! Any stick will do to beat a dog with, and any excuse is good enough for a bad cause. The excuses for attacking his infant relative were twofold. According to an ancient law of one of the Spanish provinces, that of Brabant, upon the death of one of a married couple, the survivor could only hold the property left with a life interest, it being in trust for the children of the marriage, among all of whom it was to be divided.

This seemed good enough for Louis to go upon: he claimed the Low Countries as the share of his wife, Marie Thérèse, the half-sister of the young King of Spain. The other pretext which he gave was that, her dowry never yet having been paid to him in cash, he would be obliged to take it in territory.

Making a secret alliance with the Dutch—to the effect that he would do nothing without them in the Low Countries, and that he would help them to force the entry into the Thames—he made a secret treaty of an opposite character with Charles II. By this—while Louis would betray Holland by not sending his fleet—Charles agreed to betray his own subjects, and to give Louis a free hand to do as he liked in the Low Countries.

Once more reassuring Spain—on May 1st, 1667—upon the 8th of the same month Louis declared war against her, and gaily set out for his campaign in Flanders, to be shortly afterwards followed by the ladies of the Court.

CHAPTER XVII

Athénaïs, Marquise de Montespan

1667—1668

When, in May, 1667, Louis XIV. went to the wars in Flanders, the Vicomte de Turenne was in command of the Royal army. The advantages of the King's policy of duplicity became at once evident as, although the Spanish Governor of the Low Countries had, in the person of Marsin, a Frenchman, an excellent General, his fortifications were all in bad order. When he had requested permission to repair them, he had been reproved from Madrid and told that such a request upon his part was tantamount to casting suspicion upon the very Christian King. The result was that the advance upon Charleroi of Turenne, with thirty-five thousand men, resulted in the immediate capture of that city.

Turenne halted at Charleroi for a fortnight instead of advancing upon Brussels, as the young bloods of the Court, with whom his army had been strongly recruited, were most anxious that he should do. The old General of the Thirty Years' War, however, evidently feared Dutch intervention, especially as June 4th came and passed, and the promised help to the Dutch fleet had not been sent by Louis.

In the meantime, without waiting for the French ships, when they did not appear to keep their tryst, the gallant Dutch Admiral Ruyter sailed up the Thames by himself upon the appointed day, greatly to the consternation of Charles II. and the English nation. After humiliating

London by his presence above Gravesend for some weeks, Ruyter concluded a peace with Charles, upon terms more honourable than might have been expected. For the Dutchman generously accorded the honour of the flag in British waters to Charles, while each of the combatants reserved such conquests as they might have made. While these terms were being accepted in London, Turenne turned his victorious army to the north, and, being joined by a large force which he had previously sent to the Rhine, took successively several towns of French Flanders, including Tournai and Douai. The Dutch intervened at this period, and proposed peace. Louis, however, was not satisfied without gaining possession of the hitherto always neutral province of Franche Comté, and also Luxembourg, in what is now Belgium.

Leaving Turenne and the army to continue the summer campaign without him for awhile, the King now returned to meet the Queen and ladies of the Court, whose presence he thought would grace his armies in the field. The ladies, with their huge golden coaches, which served for all purposes, eating, sleeping, card-playing, as well as travelling, had reached Compiègne, where they were installed in the château when Louis arrived with the captured Spanish banners.

Long before this the needy Marquis de Lauzun, who had been released from the Bastille, had been trying to place the charms of Madame de Montespan before the King in as favourable a light as possible. Louis, however, knew the daughter of the Duc de Mortemart well. He remembered Mademoiselle Athénaïs de Tonney-Charente when, as lady-in-waiting to Madame, she had been found a dangerous person, an *intrigante* who was given to causing quarrels among her companions. Madame had sent the young lady away before her marriage, in September, 1663, with the Marquis de Montespan. This noble was a grandson of Zamet the merry Moor, in whose Italian *palazzo* in Paris Henri IV. had spent so many hours in gambling, eating, drinking, and love-making. In the house of the clever buffoon Zamet it had been that the unfortunate

ATHÉNAÏS DE MORTEMART,
Marquise de Montespan.

MADEMOISELLE DE FONTANGES.

HORTENSE MANCINI, Duchesse de Mazarin.

mistress of Henri, Gabrielle d'Estrées, had found her death from poison, by partaking of one of the delicious dishes prepared by her host's own hands.

The grandson of Zamet had none of his grandsire's failings; had he, indeed, been addicted to the gentle art of poison, he would undoubtedly have employed them as a corrective for the faults of his beautiful wife, for whom, after his marriage, he had contrived to obtain a place about the Queen's person. As it was, he contented himself by punishing her with an historic box on the ear.

Athénaïs de Montespan has herself admitted that she first came to Court with the intention of becoming the King's mistress. Finding him, however, continuing to occupy himself with Louise, now the Duchesse de la Vallière, she became religious—and waited. Her religion imposed upon the Queen, her sprightly, lively character amused the nobles of the court. She was a large, handsome woman, with bust strongly developed, thus forming a considerable contrast to the more modest charms of la Vallière.

For one of the best descriptions of Madame de Montespan we are indebted to a contemporary writer. Touchard-Lafosse, in his *Chroniques de l'Œil-de-Bœuf*, speaks of the lady in the following terms:

"It must be confessed that the Marquise de Montespan, who reigns to-day over the heart of His Majesty, would be one of the perfect beauties of the Court, if the *ensemble* of her features did not reveal an audacity rather calculated to provoke desire than to conquer solid affection. The eyes of this lady are fine, but they sparkle with a fire which is more libertine than tender. Her mouth has an extreme freshness, but the smile it displays appears disdainful and mocking. Blonde hair of a happy shade, a dazzling and well-placed throat, moulded arms, a darling little hand, a regular but rather stout waist, a well-turned leg, of which the calf is pronounced and muscular, announce a powerful constitution. Such is a personal description of the Marquise.

"No one has more *esprit* and no one has it of a more

singular nature; it is a continual mixture of sense, sarcasm, and gallantry, the piquant emanation of a temperament in a continual state of excitement. This continuous irritation of an imperious nature lends to the conversation of the Marquise a justness which exceeds the common: good sense in her mouth is a passion. . . . That sort of eloquence, of which the grace and unaffectedness causes to be overlooked an almost cynical style of conversation, is a talent of the family. They call it at the Court *langue Mortemart*."

The duties of Madame de Montespan as lady of the robes to the Queen do not appear to have been very heavy, for, a stickler for etiquette in all other matters, the Spanish Marie Thérèse disliked it about her own person. St. Simon, in his Memoirs, gives us some interesting details upon this point. In conformity to the manners of the day, the Queen's tailor laced up her Majesty's corsets, for the ladies then had no female dressmakers, but tailors who made their dresses, their corsets—and who fitted them on. It was in vain that the young Queen modestly begged of the King permission to make an innovation in the habits of the Court, representing that she wished to dispense with this custom of being laced by men. Her august spouse replied that the right of lacing the Queen belonged to the appointment of her tailor, or that of her valets of the wardrobe, that these appointments were paid charges, and that it did not at all enter into his views to change their prerogatives. Louis added that, since in public it was the habit of ladies of the Court to appear in a very *décolletée* condition, it really was not worth while to talk about such a trifle as a valet lacing her Majesty!

The duties of Madame de Montespan went therefore no further than presenting the chemise, petticoat, and stockings of the Queen to the first femme de chambre, who in turn presented them to Marie Thérèse, when the modest Queen, in spite of ancient *obligations*, insisted upon putting these garments on for herself.

When Louis returned from the war to meet the ladies of the Court at Compiègne, the servile Marquis de Lauzun,

who, in Molière's subsequent broad comedy *L'Amphytrion*, performed the part of Mercury to the King's Jupiter, had paved the way for the attainment of her wishes by the mock-pious Madame de Montespan. Lauzun, who was at this time Colonel of the King's own regiment of Guards, an occasion for expenses which he could ill afford, was not alone in desiring the downfall of la Vallière. For it was justly considered among the nobles of the Court that, with a change of mistresses, the lavish sums hitherto expended by the King in one direction might be diverted so as to flow in other directions.

Strange, therefore, as it may seem, when Louis rejoined the Court, there was no apartment for the King upon the same floor as his spouse. The suite which should have been his was occupied by Mademoiselle. The King was obliged to mount to the floor above, where he found a room only separated by a staircase from the apartments of Madame de Montausier. Under the wing of this, the most virtuous lady of the day, Athénaïs de Montespan, now twenty-seven years old and the mother of two children, had taken shelter. In the safety of the apartment of she who, as Julie de Rambouillet, had been celebrated, in many sonnets and madrigals, for her purity and honesty during fifteen years of pre-nuptial attachment, who could find a word to say against Madame de Montespan? It was certainly not the good Madame de Montausier herself who had any hand in sending away the sentinel who stood upon the staircase between the King's room and the chamber occupied by the pious young matron, who had openly placed herself under her chaperonage. It was the King who sent away the sentry, and the unfortunate governess of the Royal children was completely befooled by the use which was made of her good name to further the designs of "la Montespan."

These designs were completely successful; a few days later there was no one about the Court, with the exception of the Queen and Madame de Montausier, who did not know the real conditions of affairs. Nay, more, the terrible news sped, upon the wings of the wind, to cut to the quick the

trusting heart of Louise de la Vallière, who had been left behind at Versailles.

After a few days at Compiègne, the King moved on, taking the Queen and her ladies with him to La Fère, then moved on ahead alone, with some troops to Guise. Suddenly the Queen is much upset: the news has arrived that the Duchesse de la Vallière is in a state of despair—that Louise has started to follow the army. While Madame de Montausier is the first to sympathise with her Majesty and to speak with indignation of the audacity of "*cette fille*," Athénaïs de Montespan does not forget also to give vent to the most virtuous principles. "May God preserve me!" she exclaims, in tones which carry conviction with them, "from ever becoming the mistress of the King! Were I ever to have such a misfortune, I should never have the effrontery to appear before her Majesty!"

That night la Vallière arrived, and was brutally refused food by the Queen. Her heart was, however, little concerned with meat or drink; carried away by her true and loving devotion to the worthless King, she determined, at all costs, to join him, to fly to his side, to beg from him love and mercy.

It was in vain that, the next day, Marie Thérèse gave orders to her Guards to prevent the departure of la Vallière, as she herself wished to obtain speech of the King first—in vain—for the neglected lady has left already in her coach at full gallop. While the Queen, pursuing and crying from the windows, "*Arrêtez la!—arrêtez la!*" is journeying in the dust of the coach-wheels of the heart-stricken Duchesse, la Vallière, from a height, perceives the army. Like a whirlwind her coach arrives in the camp, and in a flood of tears she falls at the feet of the faithless Louis!

Were it not all so heart-rending, it would be difficult to repress a smile at the misplaced agitation of the Queen. For, while she was almost off her head with rage, in her disappointment in being surpassed and defeated by la Vallière in the race, she might have saved her tears of mortification. Neither herself nor la Vallière were any

longer in the game, Athénaïs de Montespan, the woman who had imposed upon her by her mock devotions, having already carried off the stakes.

Throughout the rest of the journey to the seat of war the King sometimes rode, sometimes entered the great golden coach to laugh with la Montespan, la Vallière, and the Queen, who now formed a happy family—nicknamed *les trois reines*. It was the former of the ladies, however, who did the most of the laughing; nor did she forget to testify to the Queen of her devotion, by the interest she took in the hospitals and orphan asylums of the newly captured territory in French Flanders, through which they were travelling.

In this merry guise was the summer campaign continued to the gates of Lille, which the inhabitants of the town forced the gallant commander Marsin to throw open to Louis XIV. upon August 8th, 1667. In his retreat, the combined armies of France fell upon this brave French General and cut his Spanish forces to pieces. Turenne was not, however, so successful before Gand and Dendermonde, from both of which places he retreated after figuring for a time before the walls.

While the conquering King now halted for a while,—the intervention of Holland having put a check upon his glorious career of continual triumph—he occupied his delay by a few recompenses to those to whom he considered the honours of the campaign were chiefly due. In this way Lauzun suddenly blossoms out into the Colonel-General of the Dragoons with an almost Royal salary, while to M. de Montausier—honest man!—fell the position of Governor of the Dauphin. While the Court applauded and smiled at the appointment, the prudish Madame de Montausier became ill with the disgrace which she felt it brought to her.

The King and Court returning to Versailles for the winter, now it was that Louis gave orders to Molière to write a play in which all the disgraceful mystery of "the night of Compiègne" was made a mystery no longer.

With his wife as Alcmena, the Marquis de Montespan, who was, naturally, the Amphytrion of the piece, lost his patience. Fearless of consequences, he administered to his unfaithful Athénaïs a most tremendous slap upon the face.

While, with one cheek all red, she flies off to complain to her Royal lover, the Marquis himself indulges in a freak of a revengeful nature, which will always make the name of the outraged husband remain famous as that of a humourist. In a black coach, with black horn panels, and his servants, like himself, in black, he proceeded to drive about the environs of the Palace of Versailles. Every one, including the King, inquired "for whom are you in mourning"? "For my wife, whom I have lost!" fearlessly replied the Marquis de Montespan. Furious, the King deprived him of his place at Court and banished him to the country; but he had, he felt, by making them ridiculous, had his revenge upon both Louis and the hypocrital Athénaïs, his spouse.

By February 2nd, 1668, the King obtained his desire with reference to obtaining Franche Comté. The matter, while arranged by treachery, through the agency of le grand Condé, was so carried out as to redound to the further glory of the Sun-god, the *Roi Soleil*, as the King delighted in being named.

Since the return of Condé, upon the signing of the Peace of the Pyrenees in 1659, he had been left in semi-neglect—an entire neglect, so far as obtaining any military command in the armies of the King, against which he had fought for so long. During the eight years which had elapsed since his restoration to his rank and domains, this Prince of the Blood-Royal had remained either at Chantilly or, perched like the bird of prey he resembled, upon the mountains above Dijon. Here he had imprisoned his young wife in a dungeon, where, by his orders, the niece of Cardinal de Richelieu remained even after his death. It was a cruel return for the efforts which she had made to raise the south upon his behalf, during his imprisonment by Mazarin; but what else could have been expected from le grand Condé?

In the winter of 1667 his cousin the King saw his opportunity of using him for a piece of dirty work in Franche Comté, for which his position at Dijon rendered him available. The glory of the Spanish Governor of Franche Comté was that he could maintain himself unarmed in that neutral state or province. As a matter of fact, he had the Swiss behind him, ready to come at his call. His principal counsellor and friend was a certain Abbé de Watteville, who, for some time, on account of a murder committed in youth, had become a Turk. This de Watteville, Condé bought by the promise of the Archbishopric of Besançon. Accordingly, when sent to demand assistance from the Swiss, the renegade priest, on the contrary, treacherously told them that their services would not be required.

All was now ready for the King, for the conquest of an unarmed state! He set forth from Paris in the middle of winter, and upon his arrival at Dijon, Condé was already able to hand him over the keys of Besançon. Louis proceeded to Dôle, in Franche Comté. Here he threatened to put every one of the inhabitants to the sword, whereupon they opened the gates of the town.

A fortnight had been sufficient for the conquest of Franche Comté. It was a surprise to the world at large—another triumph for the brother-in-law of the Royal Spanish baby. There was another surprise in store. It was not a pleasant one for the Roi Soleil, when he learned its nature, from the lips of the Dutch Ambassador at St. Germain, upon his return as a hero to his Court. Charles II. had gone back upon him; Sweden, the ally of France for forty years, had gone back upon him; de Witt, the friend of the French, had done the same! The surprise was the Triple Alliance, of England, Sweden, and Holland against Louis XIV.!

While Louis helplessly struggled against the curb which, under pretence of its being but a horsewhip for Spain, was, in the most respectful terms, placed in his own Royal mouth, he received another sudden check. The French Queen of Portugal, to which country he had

recently paid a very large subsidy, created a revolution in the kingdom. She got rid of one husband, married another, and declared for Spain!

It was evident that Europe had at length recognised in Louis XIV. a common danger. Franche Comté had to be given up, by the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, signed in May, 1668. The sole conquests which remained to the Roi Soleil permanently, as the result of the war, were French Flanders—and Madame la Marquise de Montespan!

CHAPTER XVIII

The Omnipotence of Jupiter-Louis

1661 AND LATER

NOTWITHSTANDING the check to his vanity caused by the compulsory restitution of Franche Comté, it must be acknowledged that Louis XIV. was still the sole occupier of the giddiest pinnacle in Europe at the time of the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

In France all were dazzled, including the young King himself. Louis was still under thirty, and an aureole was upon his brow, a halo of divinity was freely accorded him by his trembling subjects. Nor was it without reason that they trembled in the presence of the most imposing, if most detestable, figure which had surprised Europe since the times of the Roman Empire.

A very clear idea of the ascendancy of terror which this god exercised over Europe is shown by the quantity of facts which no one, even out of France, dared to write until towards the end of his reign. He hated the press—owing to the souvenirs of the Fronde, which had compelled his flight from Paris—and treated it roughly. Pamphlet writers were punished with death; upon one occasion not only was the pamphleteer hanged, upon the simple order of the Lieutenant of Police, but the book-binder also. At the same time many were put into the Bastille, to stay there until they died.

Even to neutral countries reached the long arm of Louis. Those who had offended him were not safe in

Switzerland or elsewhere; he had them carried off and imprisoned. Stories such as those of the mystery of the Man in the Iron Mask were whispered by men under their breath; the author of a pamphlet against the Archbishop of Reims was put into a cage, which had already been used by Louis XI. to imprison La Balue.

Nor was the terror less in the immediate *entourage* of the King. The terror of Madame will be remembered, when de Vardes threatened to show to Louis the imprudent letters she had received from the Comte de Guiche, and how the villain imposed upon her in consequence. This general timidity makes the Court history vague. Only la Grande Mademoiselle and Madame, the mother of the Regent, have dared to tell the truth. St. Simon came later, and is not to be relied upon for the events of the earlier portion of the reign. Had he come at the beginning, he too would never have dared to tell the truth of many of the incidents which have only become known by the light thrown by political correspondences which refer to the interior history of the Court.

The enormous personal force of Louis XIV. during his reign can be seen in the action of the great engine-driver Colbert. At times it is not the engine of the state which itself works—simply the man who drives it, who becomes the fly-wheel, the mainspring, nay, more, the actual machine itself. Thus, the law becomes nothing; the administration is everything. And this administration works by fits and starts in an irregular manner. Why? Simply because behind the hand of Colbert, the man at the wheel, there is a stronger, a superior hand, which pushes it this way and that, at will. It is the hand of Louis XIV. After Colbert, it becomes worse still. Then, the administration falls to the wonderful attempt of trying to drive France man by man, conscience by conscience; not only the conduct of each man, but that of his soul becomes its care—it seeks to arrange for his salvation. Again, this is the hand of the man behind the man at the wheel that attempts so much and with such violent efforts. It is the hand of

Louis XIV. The result is that much is attempted; but, while great things are missed, much is made of little ones. The Spanish Succession must certainly be thought about, but more important is the cult called Quietism. The reform of the ladies of Saint-Cyr, cloistered in spite of themselves, requires more attention than the will left by Charles II. The mortal combat between Bossuet and Fénelon for Madame de Maisonfort becomes a matter of more interest than all the rest put together! Thus, in seeking to hold too much, nothing is held, everything falls to pieces. But still it is the same hand which would build the structure that tears the framework to pieces. It is the hand of Louis XIV.

In 1668, after the gay war of Flanders—that joyous and amusing fête which occurred after the death of the Queen-mother had removed any old influences from the giddy young people at the Court—all were dazzled, especially the King himself. Everything was put down to his happy genius, to his fortunate auspices—all avowed as much. In the earlier stages, in the merry summer weather, had not he been the one to show to Turenne the way to capture thirty-six towns and innumerable castles? In the biting winter season, was it not the glorious young King who instructed Condé, that now-tamed wild beast, how to conduct a short campaign to a successful conclusion among snow and ice? Of course it was the King alone!—no one but the King who, through summer suns and winter snows, could thus guide the footsteps of his ignorant Generals along the sure and certain pathways leading to glorious victory. If it were not he, why did the very *savants* say so? If not the King, what made the poets sing his pæans of praise? Surely not the sums with which they were paid by Colbert—they had nothing to do with it! Hero himself, muse himself, fountain himself of the *belles lettres*, the King inspired all. Who, forsooth! but the King was it that endowed Molière, his servant, his valet de chambre, with the divine afflatus whence emanated his finest works, his most racy pieces? And such pieces—*l'Amphytrion*!

No, of a surety, never had Molière presented the Court of France, insulted every family tie with such a play, had not the god himself so willed it. Nowadays, all that remains of the play is the modern meaning of the word amphytrion, a host, derived from the joyous remark of Molière, "*Le véritable Amphytrion, c'est l'Amphytrion où l'on dine.*

The piece meant far more to the world when, by the order of the ruler of Olympus, Jupiter-Louis, it was first performed, to his own eternal shame and that of the great genius debased by its production. *L'Amphytrion* of Molière celebrated the apotheosis of woman as the queen of pleasure in France. It authorised, from the heights, the eternal farce of the deceived husband, the greatest, most worthy subject of jest in Christendom. When the victorious King of France said that this was right, who was there among the humbler mortals to gainsay him? Coming from the gods, the morality was evidently divine; moreover, it taught a lesson easy for all to learn. Since it was the right of the King to take at will the wives of his subjects for his Royal pleasure, was it not the duty of others to follow his kingly example—to trample, each upon the one a little lower than himself? At all events, that was the lesson as it was learned in France.

In addition to taking from him his wife, Louis loaded the Marquis de Montespan with insults. Although depriving him of his place at the Court and sending him into exile, he insisted upon paying him for his wife. By force, he constrained the unhappy husband to accept the sum of one hundred thousand crowns as the price of his wife's infamy. And then he wrote out, with his own hand, an act of divorce between the Marquis and Marquise de Montespan, and sent it to be registered at the Châtelet as valid. This ignoble action on the part of the King affected all France; it became, as a sequence, more than ever the right of those of one class to dishonour those of the class beneath them. And, since such was the fashion of the King and Court, instead of avenging their

wrongs, the rising tear was swallowed by the sufferers, the dishonour was treated as a good joke to be laughed at—nothing more!

The feeling of the day on this point seems to have been exactly rendered in the following lines, from Molière's *Saganarelle*:

> Voir enjôler sa femme, et n'en témoigner rien,
> Se pratique aujourd'hui par force gens de bien.
> N'allons donc point chercher à faire une querelle
> Pour un affront qui n'est que pure bagatelle.
> L'un m'appelera sot, de ne me venger pas;
> Mais je le serais fort de courir au trépas.

Poor Molière! none suffered more bitterly than the poet from the overbearing insolence of the nobles of the Court. The Comte de Guiche and the Marquis de Lauzun became successively the lovers of his wife, the young Armande, to whom he was passionately attached. While all the Court laughed at his misfortunes, he had no other remedy than to join in laughing with the others against himself.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding that Madame vainly demanded grace for her *chevalier*, Molière revenged himself upon de Guiche when, in *Le Misanthrope*, he called him—

> Le grand flandrin qui perd le temps
> À cracher dans un puits pour faire des ronds;

while, as for Lauzun, he was not forgotten in that scathing skit upon the Court libertines, *Don Juan*.

The world at large, however, who had not at their disposal the poet's pen, were content to accept things as they were. The King was gay! the Court was gay! and since the days of Louis XIV. has not France ever remained the gayest country in the world? But it is a Republic now, and, with the memory of the Grand Monarque as a wholesome reminder of the Bourbon days, who shall not say, Long may it remain so? Certainly not the present historian of the Bourbon Kings, their Courts, and their customs.

It were well now to turn from the merely Court life of this monstrous Ego, who was the King, to see what it was proposed to accomplish, and also what actually was accomplished, by the factotum of the said Ego, in the administrative line—always, of course, with the hand of Jupiter-Louis, by jerks, steering the steersman. By the will of the Creative Power, Colbert started a new France. As the King thought, so did the Minister write. The workman, the genius inspired by the Olympian Jove, accomplished by ceaseless labour what the King conceived, or—since the Bastille is no longer, and we can dare to speak the truth—that which the King was brought to think that he had conceived. It came to the same thing in the end, and increased his grandeur all the same, even if it be not put in exactly the same way. We will begin with the accomplishments.

Everything seemed to come into being at once. The civil ordonnance, the criminal ordonnance, headed the list of the creations. Then the royal Roads, the Royal canals uniting the two seas—even as the good King Henri IV. had intended to make them—became accomplished facts. Administration, laws, instruments of laws, industries, commerce, especially internal industries and internal commerce, were created next. After them, came that which was to control them, the Bureaucracy. Internal customs regulations, hitherto existing between province and province, were suppressed over a great portion of the country. The colonies, which had been under the sway of individuals who had made of themselves almost their kings, were brought back and brought under the King's own direct orders; moreover, fresh and more important colonies were created.

The navy sprang into being with incredible rapidity. Seventy ships-of-war were built in four years, a hundred and ninety-four were finished in six. All the sailors of the merchant navy were declared to be the King's own men. At a nod from Jupiter-Louis, they were bound to leave their employment, no matter how lucrative, and

serve for almost nothing and in misery upon the war vessels.

Manufactories were started, and an elective Board—of mixed merchants and farmers-general—established, to decide all litigation between commercial interests and the public treasury.

Enormous duties were placed upon Dutch and English imports; these resulted in an immense impetus being given to the home manufactory of woollen stuffs and silks. The trade of Lyons thus soon became immense, exporting to the extent of fifty millions of *livres* per annum. It was proposed to make France Queen of the Seas, to smash up England, crush Holland, annex all the Indies, take the Spanish colonies, and divert the Spanish treasure-laden galleons from them into the new French ports of Brest, Dunkirk, and Rochefort.

Fortunately for the rest of the world, this part of the programme of Jupiter-Louis was not accomplished. Neither were the wild dreams of young Louvois, the War Minister, according to which the Royal chariot of Louis was to pass over Europe from end to end, crushing all opposition into powder underfoot. The best of the Spanish provinces were to be annexed by France, anything else to be given to the Emperor Leopold, who, although younger than himself by four years, Louis proposed to succeed. For this purpose he bought for a large sum the vote of Bavaria.

The Grecian Archipelago was explored and charts made, in 1670, as a means by which to approach Turkey and attack Constantinople.

A crusade was to be inaugurated against all Protestants, not only at home—where it took place—but England was to be converted by force, and Holland also. The only difficulty which Louis found about this matter was in deciding which of these two countries was to be converted first.

From the foregoing statement of what was actually accomplished and of the things which it was proposed to do, it will be seen that Louis XIV., who thus disdainfully

trampled the whole world under his feet, only pausing to consider which parts he thought worthy of annexing to France, was in reality a very great King indeed! Is it a matter for surprise, if—believing all of these projects capable of realisation—Louis so firmly believed in his own divinity?

CHAPTER XIX

The Trials of Madame

1666—1669

The Queen-mother, Anne of Austria, died in 1666, when, as an expiation for the weaknesses of her life, she left behind a last prayer to her son—an entreaty that he would extirpate heresy in France. It was a request too much in accordance with the King's own views regarding the Protestants not to be remembered by him with terrible earnestness, as shown subsequently by the dragonnades and the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

At the time of Anne's death, Madame was so ill, as the result of bringing into the world a dead child, that she was expected to follow the Queen. To aggravate the afflictions of this unhappy daughter of Charles I., her enemies, of that Cabal of which the late Queen had been the fountain head, had struck a cruel blow at her good name by publishing in Holland a horrible libel.

The name of this disgraceful pamphlet was *Les Amours de Madame et du Comte de Guiche.* Its effects were immediately felt in the persecutions of her husband, Monsieur now bullying her, not from jealousy, although that was the pretext, but in order to force his wife to persuade the King to give him the longed-for appanage of Languedoc. How absolutely indifferent Madame was to him was shown by the great *éclat* with which he went off hunting upon the very day of his wife's terrible confinement. It seemed to be done intentionally, to inform the world at large that

Henriette was nothing to him. The King showed becoming sympathy with his sister-in-law, but, as she remained in a weak state and he could not bear to be with sick people, he also neglected Madame that year, the rest of which he devoted to Louise de la Vallière—who presented him at its close with another child.

A great misfortune for the Duchesse d'Orleans was the fact that her only son, the infant Duc de Valois, died almost in the cradle. For the infant Dauphin was very sickly, and this child was the next heir. The King had shown the greatest affection for this little boy, and, as Madame herself had much of the grace and charm of the Valois princesses in her nature, he evidently had hoped the child would take after her, to become some day perhaps another François I. With the loss of this child, Henriette lost much of her influence, or rather, we may say, of her strong hold upon the King.

In the year 1667, while again in poor health, Madame received a shock when, after the gay campaign in Flanders, Louis returned openly to parade the material charms of Madame de Montespan before the Court. An additional and more terrible shock she received, at the same time, from the disgraceful behaviour of her husband. The degraded Duc d'Orléans, having turned himself as much into a woman as possible, had now selected as his *ami en titre* a man as dissolute as himself. Dressed in woman's clothes—painted, patched, affectedly aping woman's ways—Monsieur might now be seen going to balls, hanging, like any other young lady, upon the arm of the Chevalier de Lorraine. One is at a loss to understand how a man like Louis, with his eminently virile tastes, was ever able to resist the temptation to put his brother in the Bastille and keep him there! At any rate, he was too disgusted with his conduct ever to give him the appanage he asked for. This, however, seems but small punishment for the disgrace which Philippe d'Orléans brought upon the crown to which he was so closely allied. The Court at this time was a living scandal: the married King openly consorting with the married Marquise,

and the brother of the throne, more shameless still, mincing like a girl upon the arm of the Chevalier!

It is no matter for surprise if, in her distress, the twenty-four-year-old Princess now threw herself upon the rough-and-ready arm of Cosnac, Bishop of Valence. Whatever violent counsels this almoner of Monsieur may have given Henriette as regards the proselytising of England, with reference to her husband his counsels were sound. To reclaim Monsieur, to lift him up once more from the mire of the pig-sty in which he preferred to wallow, was the earnest desire of the Bishop equally with the wife. The counsels which he gave to Madame were to try to make a soldier of her husband. Acting upon this advice, Henriette contrived to get her brother Charles II. to exert his influence with Louis, in order to obtain for Monsieur the command of the army of Flanders. Although, fortunately for France, this request was inffectual, Monsieur consented to go to the wars and fight under Turenne in the campaign nominally conducted by the King.

To keep up his courage, the worthy Cosnac not only went with him, but, to ensure his fighting, accompanied him into the trenches. There Monsieur was not particularly anxious to go at first, pleading that he needed confession and absolution. The absolution was promptly given by the Bishop of Valence, after which the almoner personally conducted the Duc d'Orléans under fire. Monsieur, when not in the trenches, amused himself with making his tent as much like a lady's boudoir as possible, hanging it round with mirrors and feminine fal-lals. Unfortunately, the Chevalier de Lorraine appearing upon the scene, he became once more a woman rather than a soldier, spending his time now in ecstasies over the fine figure the Chevalier made upon a horse. When one day his *mignon* received a slight wound, the grief of this foolish Prince was inconsolable—he wept over the Chevalier like the girl he resembled. Then he left the army and returned to his wife at Villers-Cotterets, to rant and rave to Madame of the charms and virtues of the Chevalier!

This knight of many virtues now returned and established himself in the Palais-Royal, where he behaved as master. Soon Madame found that she had no influence left ; not only were all the household completely at the beck and call of the Chevalier alone, but Monsieur, acting under his orders, behaved brutally to his patient and uncomplaining spouse.

Insult upon insult was heaped upon the head of this great-grand-daughter of Mary Queen of Scots. Jealous of the influence of the Bishop of Valence, Monsieur contrived to obtain the exile of Henriette's sole mainstay and support.

No sooner was Cosnac about to depart, leaving Madame in tears, than another blow fell. For four years the Chevalier had had a liaison with Mademoiselle de Fiennes, one of Madame's ladies-of-honour. After a violent scene with this young lady, the Chevalier demanded her immediate expulsion, the order for which Monsieur gave without consulting his wife.

Before she left, Madame contrived to have a casket belonging to the girl broken open, and to possess herself of some letters. For she feared, and with reason, that Lorraine had communicated to his mistress certain Royal secrets which had been confided to her by Charles II., which the Chevalier might have learned from Monsieur.

A terrible blow was dealt to the Chevalier by the loss of these letters, and he sought to make peace with Madame, sending to her Father Zoccoli, a low Italian Jesuit, who connived at all the vices of Monsieur. In vain, however, was it that the priest endeavoured, by all means in his power, to get the letters back, for they were safely off to the country in the pocket of the exiled Bishop of Valence.

This was in May, 1688, just at the time that England had joined the Triple Alliance against France. The only hope for Madame—friendless as she now was in her own home and neglected by the King—lay in her brother Charles II. Could she but bring about a *rapprochement* between her brother and Louis, the former would, she felt, be able to protect her against the brutalities of her

husband. This, despite all his selfishness, Charles was ever anxious to do, for of his love for his sister there never was the slightest question.

In reply to her letters to Charles, we find him answering Madame, in the month of July, that "in all negotiations, the part which she will have will show her how much he loves her," and almost at the same date he tells the French Ambassador, "Madame passionately desires an alliance between me and France, and, as I love her tenderly, I shall be glad to show what power her prayers have over me."

At the same time the King of England, whose want of money and natural predilection for his mother's country urged him towards France, wrote to Louis his excuses for the Triple Alliance, saying that he had been forced into it against his will.

Charles II.'s mother, Henrietta Maria, and Lord St. Albans, to whom at the French Court she was supposed to be secretly married, had long since ardently desired to see his entry into the Catholic fold. For this reason, they had already employed his sister Henriette to work upon his feelings, while Bishop Cosnac had been acting in the same direction, although the ideas of the warlike prelate had lain more towards the conversion of England by an armed force.

No ideas of treachery to the country in which she was born entered into the head of the daughter of Charles I. in the negotiations which she undertook. On the contrary, she strongly wished to see the might of England increased, and, knowing the views of Louis XIV. as opposed to those of his Minister Colbert, imagined that she saw her way to so increasing it. Louis had expressed himself as "willing to leave three-quarters of the commerce of the world to Charles if only to himself should be left the conquests." Accordingly, there was nothing strange in the fact that Madame should foresee her brother's kingdom becoming the Queen of the Seas, as the natural and sole successor of Spain and Holland. Wherein this young Princess failed was in understanding that the first of the conquests which

would have become necessary for Louis would have been that of her own countrymen, who would never have yielded up their religion, even should her brother become converted, without the expenditure of the last drop of blood in their veins.

Louvois, however, the hot-headed War Minister of Louis, endeavoured to make her understand this. He told her, moreover, that Turenne would by rights have to be the leader in the war of conversion, but unless he, a Protestant, should set her brother Charles II. the example of changing his religion, he would scarcely be deemed fitting for such honourable employment. Turenne, at all events, seems to have seen the force of Louvois' arguments, since, under the direction of the eloquent Bossuet, then Bishop of Condom, he studied the tenets of the Catholic faith. Being, it appears, convinced, the Vicomte changed his religion and became a Catholic, in France, at about the same time that Henriette's brother, James, Duke of York, afterwards James II., also became a Catholic in England. Charles also, as a result of the ministrations of the Jesuits and the encouragement he received from his mother and sister, now became a Catholic at heart. Accordingly, upon June 6th, 1669, he wrote to his sister that he would resist no longer, but that he had decided to apply to Louis for assistance.

Thus the views of Louvois seemed ere long likely to be realised; in the meantime, unfortunately for Madame, he supported the Chevalier de Lorraine, who in consequence became more insupportable than ever. The result of this state of things was that Madame wrote to the exiled Cosnac, with urgent prayers that he should risk a visit to Paris to see her and bring with him the letters from Lorraine to Mademoiselle de Fiennes. He came, in disguise, but falling sick on arrival, the Bishop was arrested in Paris, in his humble lodging, in mistake for a burglar.

When Louvois found that he had got the Bishop of Valence, he had him searched. The faithful friend of Madame had, however, contrived already to send her the

letters, while discreetly destroying all her own. Unfortunately, one note he had overlooked; it was one from Madame de Saint-Chaumont, the aunt of the Comte de Guiche, and governess to Madame's children. This letter from her go-between and faithful follower showed the complicity of Madame.

Ill as he was, Cosnac was hurried off to prison, without seeing Madame, and then exiled to the town of L'Ile Jourdain, a hundred leagues from Paris. The Duchesse d'Orléans also received orders from the King to dismiss Madame de Saint-Chaumont instantly, and the good lady was exiled from Paris, greatly to the grief of her mistress. Now it was that Madame, left all alone, showed her clear-headedness. Instead of herself in any way using the letters, she contrived to have it made known to Louis, through Charles II., that the Chevalier de Lorraine not only held state secrets, but could not keep them to himself. On a pretext—when Monsieur demanded from the King some Bishops' revenues for his favourite—Louis had the Chevalier torn from him. Despite the tears of his brother, the King sent the Chevalier de Lorraine, first to a prison at Pierre Encise, near Lyons, and then to the dungeons of the Château d'If, near Marseilles.

The rage and grief of the Duc d'Orléans were now more that of a wild beast than a man. Madame's kind heart was touched, far more by the grief than the rage, and she kindly interceded with the King for her bitter enemy the Chevalier. The result of her pleadings was that Monsieur was allowed to send money to his minion, while some of the hardships of his imprisonment were relaxed in his favour.

CHAPTER XX

The Poisoning of Madame

1670

The fatal ascendancy which Louis XIV. ever exercised over his sister-in-law was, in the year 1670, the cause of Madame entering into disgraceful negotiations with her brother Charles II.

Henriette had indeed cause for desiring the support of the King of France, for she was more unprotected than ever. Yielding to his brother's prayers and entreaties, Louis had given orders for the liberation of Monsieur's favourite from the Château d'If, with the understanding that the Chevalier de Lorraine was to go to Italy and remain there for a time. Not content with this, the Duc d'Orléans renewed his prayers and lamentations, whereupon, out of all patience, Louis swore violently that not for ten years at least should the Chevalier return to France. Monsieur insisted upon believing that this decision of the King was owing to the instigation of Madame, and from that moment he apparently desired her death. So terrified was the unhappy Princess at the sinister looks which now always surrounded her, that she had serious thoughts of flying to England to take refuge with her brother. At the very time that she had these thoughts in her head, Louis—who had serious need of Henriette's services—turned towards her once again. He wished her, as the only sure person whom both he and Charles could trust, to become his go-between with the King of

From the picture by Mignard in the National Portrait Gallery. Photo by Walker & Cockerell

MADAME.
Henriette, Duchesse d'Orléans.

England, for the making of a secret treaty which was a disgrace to the latter.

The interests of Great Britain at this time lay all in the direction of friendship and alliance with Holland—the secret treaty with Louis was for an offensive alliance against the States! Nothing could have been more repugnant to the inhabitants of Great Britain as a whole, sick as they had been of Jesuit plots from the days of Elizabeth, than the idea of a Catholic sovereign upon the throne. By the secret treaty, to be negotiated between Charles and his first cousin Louis, Charles would have openly to declare himself a Catholic! Since this treacherous scion of the Stuarts feared nothing more than, as he expressed it, to be sent upon his travels once more, to this undertaking he required a good deal of persuasion. Even with the promise of a big bribe, it was too risky a proceeding for Charles to accede to willingly. Therefore, the only hope for Louis, to prevail upon him to agree, lay in the personal employment of Madame, to persuade her brother to the proposed terms of, as they called it, the treaty of friendship between the two Kings.

The post between the two countries, although often used by both Charles and his sister, was uncertain; therefore, although sometimes they used a cypher, in which numbers were used instead of names, a great deal had to be trusted to personal messengers. Even they, however, were not considered safe, when not even the Ambassadors in either Court, nor the Duke of Buckingham on the one side and Colbert on the other, were entrusted with the secret. All that the Ambassadors were allowed to know, and all that the world at large was allowed to know, was that a treaty of commerce was being negotiated between France and England; but of the treaty of friendship—not a word! Great indeed were the precautions taken, to prevent either the unsuspecting Dutch or the unsuspecting subjects of Charles from having the slightest idea of what was in the wind.

For long past Charles had demanded that his sister might be allowed to visit him; it was now determined

that Henriette should, under the pretence of accepting his repeated invitations, cross over into England, when all the secret matters could be arranged between them. A Royal progress of Louis and his Court through his recently acquired towns of French Flanders was to be the excuse of the journey of all as far as Lille. There, Madame was to say farewell to the King and Court, and travel on to Dunkirk with her suite, where the English fleet would be awaiting her.

An unexpected obstacle arose in the shape of Monsieur. Furious as he was with his wife about the Chevalier, he carried her off suddenly to Villers-Cotterets, and refused to allow her to go to England. Being jealous, moreover, of the importance which Madame would gain by going to England to negotiate the treaty of commerce—for of the other he was kept in ignorance—he declared that if she did go he would go also.

For a month, until letters arrived from Charles to say that he could not receive Monsieur, Madame was forced to suffer her husband's violent humours, alone, at Villers-Cotterets, as best she could. Then Louis, getting angry, ordered his brother to obey his commands and allow his wife to go. Forced thus into compliance, Monsieur, while agreeing with an ill grace, declared that Henriette should remain only three days in England.

Madame travelled in the Royal coach upon her journey through Flanders. The other occupants of this vehicle were the King and Queen and—last but not least—the Marquise de Montespan. Louise de la Vallière had for some time past been quite eclipsed by her rival. The Marquise, moreover, had established herself in la Vallière's house, where the latter, in a spirit of self-abnegation, had frequently insisted upon dressing and adorning "la Montespan's" charms with her own hands. The King had made a habit of visiting them both together, and, whereas the still loving Louise suffered tortures when she beheld the caresses of her faithless lover showered upon the Marquise, Athénaïs, on the other hand, who had no feelings, only treated it as a good joke when, in an

occasional return of tenderness, Louis turned to console for an hour or two the woman whose tears he too often caused to flow.

Upon the occasion of the Royal progress through French Flanders, Athénaïs had, however, the field all to herself, Louise having been left behind. La Grande Mademoiselle was one of the ladies who were of the party, and, as she happened to be at this time in love with the Marquis de Lauzun, she enjoyed herself to her fill in the contemplation of his manly charms in his gorgeous uniforms at the head of the escort—enjoyed herself, that is, until the rains came—and the rains were awful! Swollen rivers, broken-down bridges, fearful roads, nights passed in barns with scarcely any food, for twenty-four hours at a time in a coach—such were the delights of the journey through a great part of French Flanders in May, 1670.

Madame crossed over into England in great state, with a suite of 237 persons, and was met by Charles II. and the Duke of York at Dover. The time was apparently passed in nothing but festivities, and thus the world at large, including Van Benninghen, the Dutch envoy, was completely deceived as to what was taking place.

Monsieur's allotted three days were extended into nearly three weeks of happiness for Madame during that month of June. Considering that, on the journey through Flanders, Monsieur had insultingly told her, before the Queen and Mademoiselle, that he saw death in her face, and it had been foretold that he would have several wives, she would gladly have allowed three years to have elapsed before seeing her husband's scowling face again.

That, however, was not to be, for never was there any real happiness for Madame for long. Even her visit to England had not been one of unalloyed pleasure, on account of a disgraceful circumstance which stained her journey. This was that Louis had forced her to take over with her, as a present to Charles, a young and very pretty Bretonne lady named Louise de Querouaille. Louis had bought the girl from her family, endowed her with an estate and title,

and promised so much allowance for every child that she might have by the King of England. This girl's baby face immediately caught Charles's fancy. He made her Duchess of Portsmouth, and she became the ancestress of the ducal house of Richmond.

Meanwhile, the secret treaty was concluded—at first in the following terms. Charles was publicly to declare himself a Catholic, for doing which he was to choose his own time and to receive as reward the sum of two millions of crowns. He was to give Louis six thousand men, to assist him in a war with Holland, and to receive, as his share of the spoils, the islands of Walcheren and Cadzand. The number of men was subsequently, by Henriette's agency, reduced to four thousand. This reduction of the force which Charles was to send was an act of extra treachery on the part of all concerned. For, by it, his army would be too weak to hold for England the promised Dutch territory, and thus Louis would be able to keep it all. Madame, however, as she always said, never could refuse to obey Louis in everything. She obeyed, therefore, upon this occasion, in a manner to make her brother's treachery a double one to his country.

Upon her return to Paris, loaded with gifts by Charles, she was received at the Court of France with delight and high consideration from all except her husband. Instead of allowing her to accompany the King and Queen to Versailles, Monsieur forced Madame to accompany him to Saint-Cloud; nor did the King protect her, as she had every right to expect that he would. With characteristic selfishness—having obtained through his sister-in-law that which he had ardently desired—he left this poor young Princess in the lurch, to the machinations of her enemies.

Accordingly, upon June 24th, 1670, despite her tears, Madame was dragged away. Although her children were with her, she now had the bitterness of discovering that her eldest daughter, a child of nine, had been so worked upon, that she detested her mother.

It was very hot weather. Being ill, upon June 26th

Madame imprudently bathed in the Seine, which made her suffer considerably. Two days later she asked for a draught of chicory-water, and, upon drinking it, cried out in agony that she was poisoned. All that afternoon and night her sufferings were terrible. The doctors, however, who were summoned persisted in declaring that she was suffering from cholera, and absolutely refused to give the poor woman, in her agony, the emetic for which she begged in vain.

Upon the arrival of the King—who reasoned with them—the doctors still refused to give her an emetic, but kept to their opinion, saying, "cholic and cholera!" One feels inclined to ask—Were these doctors in the plot with the valets of Monsieur, who were practically the valets of the Chevalier de Lorraine, and who—fearing that, after her successful mission, Madame would regain her influence over the King and drive them out—were acting in the Chevalier's interests by helping to send her out of the world?

Probably the doctors were not in the plot, but were afraid to find too clearly the proofs of poison. The alliance of the King with Charles would have been broken by its proof; the crusade against Holland, in which the clergy entered into the projects of the King, would have become abortive. Prudently and politically, to save the vengeance which might possibly fall upon their own heads, the doctors refused to discover too much! Accordingly, no one was found who dared to give the proper emetic for which, amidst her fearful agony, Madame went on begging.

Every one, from the highest in the land, came in and out, saw her, commiserated her, made remarks—some even laughed and jested. The King was far more agitated than Monsieur; the latter looked surprised, but showed no signs of sorrow. Madame herself, meanwhile, carefully observed her own progress towards death. "Look," she said to Mademoiselle; "see my nose—it has all gone in already." She never doubted that she would die. Among those who came in and out of the apartment—where, at times, she lay

rolling on the floor—were Turenne, Louise de la Vallière, Athénaïs, Olympia, the Queen, Madame de la Fayette, Condé, the accomplished de Tréville—who adored Madame—and others. No one but Mademoiselle had, however, the presence of mind to send for a priest.

The first priest to hand was the Chanoine Feuillet, Curé of Saint-Cloud, a Jansenist. This man was as cautious as the doctors. Hearing Madame say to the Maréchal de Grammont, "They have poisoned me," the Curé told her "to offer her death to God and to accuse no one." Whereupon Madame, who showed the greatest sweetness and discretion, said, "They have poisoned me, *but by accident*! Then she embraced her husband and told him that she had never wronged him with reference to the Chevalier. When Ralph Montagu, the English Ambassador arrived, she begged him, in English, not to let Charles II. hear that she had been poisoned. Catching the word "poison," the Jansenist interrupted and stopped her with the words, "Madame, think only of your God." Bossuet, the eloquent Bishop of Condom, upon whom Madame had always relied for the hour of her death, now came in; when she said, in English, that after her death he was to be given the emerald ring that she had had made for him. Bossuet, while consoling the dying woman, confirmed her in the thoughts of self-abnegation and discretion advised by Feuillet.

Gradually the King, Monsieur, all the Court, left her—the King in tears, and Mademoiselle also.

Almost to the end—while paying attention to the words of Bossuet and declaring herself a good Catholic—Henriette thought of others. To Ralph Montagu she gave the six thousand pistoles that Charles had given to her on parting. Montagu replying that he would distribute the amount among the persons of her household, Madame named them to him. She sent a message through him also to Charles: to say that she had always loved him more than life, and that that which she had persuaded him to do had been what she deemed best for his advantage.

Eventually, after a short sleep, she awoke and asked

Bossuet for the crucifix. Saying that she "loved God with all her heart," Henriette kissed the crucifix—and died. It was three o'clock in the morning, and the dawn was just beginning to glow when Madame breathed her last.

That same day, June 29th, 1670, for fear that his grief should affect his health, the King took medicine. Also, with a flippancy which offended Mademoiselle, he told her that now there was a place vacant, and asked her if she would like to occupy it. Later on in the same day, he suggested to Monsieur that he had better marry the Princess of Bavaria.

Charles II. seems to have thought it politic to pretend to believe the explanations made to him, that his sister had died from cholera, although at first he refused to accept a letter which Monsieur wrote to him. The money of Louis was, however, more to him than the death of his sister, as he proved by accepting in the end the doctors' dictum, and making believe that he was convinced.

There has been much argument as to whether Madame was poisoned or not, especially as the lady who gave her the chicory-water, Madame Desbordes, afterwards drank some of it herself without ill effects. It may, therefore, be well here to record what Saint-Simon tells us about the matter. This great chronicler says that his information was derived from M. Joly de Fleury, who was told by the same *maître d'hôtel* who was examined by the King. It is as follows:

Before re-marrying Monsieur, Louis—wishing to find out if his brother was a poisoner—sent for Furnon, the *maître d'hôtel* of Madame, and asked him the true facts of the case. Furnon told the King that the poison had been sent from Italy, by the Chevalier de Lorraine, to Beauveau, who was Madame's esquire or equerry, and to d'Effiat, her Captain of the Guards, but that Monsieur himself was kept in ignorance of the affair.

Elizabeth Charlotte of Bavaria—a Princess of the Palatinate, who became the second wife of Monsieur—tells rather a different version of the terrible affair, saying that a valet

in the service of Madame told her that d'Effiat had rubbed the poison on the cup out of which she drank the chicory water. When, afterwards, others drank of the water, they did so from a different cup.

The most horrible part of the affair is that, to please his brother, Louis permitted the return of the Chevalier de Lorraine, to become a thorn in the side of the second Madame as he had been of the first. He was allowed to serve in the army, and appointed to the position of Maréchal de Camp. That, however, policy suggested this action upon the part of the King seems more than probable. In his uncle Gaston, brother of Louis XIII., had been seen a notable example of the evils accruing to the kingdom by a brother constantly plotting against the Crown. A brother absolutely without credit, despised by the nobles and the people alike, might be ridiculous : he could never become dangerous. The presence of the Chevalier de Lorraine—ever with Philippe d'Orléans—would only serve to keep that degraded Prince constantly before France in his proper light—that of an effeminate wretch, a man who resembled a girl of the most worthless description. Such a brother might be a nonentity, but, obviously, never a source of disturbance or danger.

CHAPTER XXI

The Star of Orange

1669—1672

The extreme duplicity of Louis XIV.—his over-weening pride, and thirst for unlimited conquest were frequently the causes of counteracting the advantages which Fate threw in his way. That such was the case becomes time after time apparent, notable instances occurring before and during the course of the war which he waged against Holland, with England as his ally. During its continuance it would naturally have been imagined that the King of France would have exerted himself to the utmost to pull with his cousin Charles II., whom he had inveigled into a secret treaty entirely in opposition to the true interest of his subjects. Nevertheless, no sooner were the combined fleets of England and France ranged in line against those of Ruyter and Van Tromp than a signal act of treachery on the part of d'Estrées, the French Admiral, left the British to bear the brunt of the battle alone. Not long afterwards the same disgraceful desertion occurred a second time. The French officers—furious that they should have been called upon to perform such an ignoble part—loudly demanded an inquiry. Subsequent investigation has shown only too clearly that d'Estrées had received his orders from Louis direct, and they were clear and distinct—to leave the British in the lurch. The papers are still in existence among the archives in Paris.

The war of Holland was a religious war, and the conquest of that country intended but as a prelude to its forced conversion to Catholicism. When Holland had been completely subjugated—filled with Catholic priests and Jesuits, and all freedom of religion abolished—Louis proposed to turn his attention to England.

It must be clear to those who have studied the early career of Louis XIV. that his father-confessors had had a pretty hard time of it with him, and that he owed them something! Living in open sin with two or three women at once, one of them being a married woman; publicly, at the time of the Church festivals, taking the Communion with this latter, it would seem as if the fathers—Annat, Ferrier, and, later, la Chaise—must have possessed consciences as elastic as that of the King, to give him absolution.

Dieudonné—the gift of God—Louis was called and acknowledged to be from childhood; that he considered himself seriously as such is evident by the code of instruction which, commencing in 1670, he caused to be drawn up for the education of the Dauphin. Every line of this reveals the monstrous belief that God was in him and worked through him. The holy fathers, no doubt, interpreted this creed in their own way, and did their utmost towards directing the divine manifestations into the proper channels. Much could be permitted to the direct agent of God when it was evident that—whatever his little failings—his firm intention was to convert millions of human beings to the true Faith. The war of Holland was the first step. The laudable intention of converting the foreigner was but to be the prelude of wholesale conversion at home. What matter, if the means employed in either case were likely to be a little rough? Are not drastic measures the palpable right of an infallible Power?

While preparing for the war abroad, measures were taken to lull to a false security the heretics at home. In 1669 those of the Reformed Church were deluded by a declaration which seemed to give them a little breathing-space, a little hope.

Up to that time it had been the custom, when a Protestant was at the point of death, for his house to be invaded by *curés* and judges, who tortured the poor man's last agonising moments by urging him to die in the Catholic Faith. Only too frequently the dying man, terrified by the pains and penalties awaiting those near and dear to him if he refused, submitted to the law and the Church, and was baptised a Catholic at his last gasp. Often, however, the appearance of the torturers of the soul in his death-chamber had the unhappy effect of killing off the sick man before his time—from sheer fright.

The declaration of February, 1669, promised relief from the terrors of this invasion of the sanctity of home and conscience at the last hour ; it also forbade the custom of the kidnapping of Protestant children, that they should be forcibly brought up as Catholics. The Bishops in France were righteously indignant at such a restriction of their ancient privileges. The Jesuits, however, were "in the know." They smiled and waited, but said nothing.

At this time the Ambassador employed by Louis in England was M. de Ruvigny, a Protestant. He does not seem to have acted greatly in the interests of the Reformed Faith at any time ; moreover, appears to have communicated to Louis all that he learned from Charles II. about the unfortunate Marsilly. This man was one of the survivors of three hundred Huguenot families ejected from their homes, at an hour's notice, during the winter rains of 1661. The greater number of the miserable people died of exposure and starvation, but Marsilly, who was a man of courage and capacity, visited in turn Sweden and England. It was owing to his representations in the former country that the Swedes joined the Triple Alliance in 1668 against France. When he was in England, in 1669, Charles would willingly have had him arrested if he had dared. His ill will was so apparent to Marsilly that he fled to Switzerland. Now it was that the great Turenne—then still a Protestant—played a disgraceful part in sending three Protestant officers to lure Marsilly to his destruction.

He thought himself among friends—when he was seized, bound, and carried off into France.

The most exquisite torture was applied to the unhappy Marsilly, but he would not change his faith. To save appearances, the accusation publicly made against him was that of treason, and Protestant ministers were sent to him, to urge him to confess. Knowing the end before him, Marsilly mutilated himself horribly with a piece of broken glass. This did not save him; Louis ordered him to be broken upon the wheel before he had time to bleed to death. Further, the better to deceive the Huguenots, a minister of the Reformed Faith was present when the horrible execution was carried out.

In the following year the remonstrances of the clergy had their effect upon the King. Persecution and kidnapping of children recommenced unchecked, and once more did Lamoignon, the mainstay of the Cabal in the days of Anne of Austria, conceal in his hôtel in Paris the wretched infants torn from the arms of their bereaved parents.

Nothing was more astonishing than the submission of the Protestants. When, in one diocese alone, eighty of their places of worship were destroyed, all that they did was to assemble on the ruins and pray for the King! Moreover, they freely enlisted in the armies for the subjugation of Protestant Holland. This was the only way in which those of the Reformed Faith were likely to cross the frontiers of France, for—the better to keep them where they would be amenable to Church discipline—emigration was strictly forbidden them.

The Holland against which, without assigning any cause, Louis XIV. declared war upon April 5th, 1672, was one of mixed nationalities; French was to be heard as much as Dutch in the streets of the towns. It was the land of liberty of thought and liberty of religion—extreme tolerance having been accorded to all descriptions of religious views since the days when the fanaticism of Maurice of Orange sought to destroy the Republic in killing the old Barneveldt, the guide of his infant days.

The Holland of the seventeenth century was, moreover, essentially the country of tranquil home life. Long before any comfort was enjoyed among the lower orders in France, the hardy mariners had established on their shores homes, in thereal sense of the word, where the wife and family could dwell in peace, to read the Bible at night by the fireside, while the father ploughed the main on his distant voyages.

The Dutch maritime population—simple, laborious, God-fearing—had, however, continually been recruited from other sources throughout the century ; all the waifs, and often, too, the dregs of humanity, driven by religious persecution or the devastating wars from other countries, having been received with open arms by Holland. In this way, after the reduction of La Rochelle by Cardinal Richelieu in 1629 had utterly ruined the home of the best sailors of France, all of the maritime and Protestant population which survived had made its way to Holland. Other alluvial deposits there were of human beings, which drifted down with the muddy dregs of the Rhine, the Meuse, and the Scheldt. Many of these were starved and persecuted, all were unhappy, when they came to find a shelter behind the protecting sea-dykes of the foggy flats. Thus adventurers, mercenary soldiers out of employment, rascals of one sort or another, all came to share around the open board which was spread to all.

There were thus two classes of men in Holland : first, the Dutch and many French, who were established as sailors and manufacturers ; secondly, French again—and others of various nationalities—soldiers, and refugees of all classes, a population as yet scarcely settled to fixed occupations. Of the former class were constituted the law-abiding followers of Jan de Witt, the gallant sailors who fought under the flags of Ruyter and van Tromp ; of the latter—the adherents of the rival of de Witt, William, the ambitious young Prince of Orange—the enemy of the State.

The tendencies of de Witt had ever leaned towards France. None saw more clearly than he the mutual advantages to

be gained by uninterrupted trade and peace between that country and the Republic. With these objects in view, there was almost no humiliation to which de Witt was not willing to agree, in order to avert the horrors of war. But the States-General went farther even than de Witt wished. When Louis and his paid servant Charles went so far as to demand that the whole Dutch fleet, of perhaps a hundred vessels, under Ruyter or van Tromp, should strike its flag to every English vessel it should meet, the Dutch agreed to do so. When again, Charles II. requested that his nephew, the nineteen-year-old Prince of Orange, should be made Captain-General of the Army and Admiral of the Navy for life, they also agreed.

Previously to this both de Witt and the great Condé had given to Louis advice which, although offered for different reasons, amounted to the same thing. While de Witt begged and implored Louis to avoid war with Holland, the reason which he gave was, that the real interests of France were that peace should be maintained. When Condé proffered his advice to leave Holland alone, and advised the King strictly to limit the war to the Spanish Low Countries, his reason was that as a soldier he saw infinite difficulties ahead in completing the subjugation of the Dutch ; such, for instance, as German intervention being probable. To neither one nor the other would Louis listen. Therefore, when—after all the dignities which could be desired had been thrust upon the Prince of Orange—the French King still determined upon an unprovoked war, he threw away one of the chances which Fate had given him.

For this young Prince was a half-Frenchman, a French subject and the leader of the French gentlemen refugees in Holland. Through him and his following, for the sake of the support the French King could lend him in his ambitious designs, there would have been little which Louis might not have obtained. But still his pride determined him to attack the unoffending country, merely for his own glorification. For this purpose, even when the

Dutch offered to disband the army under William of Orange, Louis refused to allow it. For had there been no army, there could have been no fighting, no glory for himself, no reason left for expending blood and treasure. Without war, through Orange, when the army was disbanded and he had taken what he wanted in the way of territory, Louis could still have flooded the country with his Jesuits.

The Prince of Orange, afterwards William III. of England, was at this time a French subject, holding his fief of Orange in Dauphiné from Louis XIV. His mother was the Princess Mary of England, daughter of Charles I., and his grandmother was Henrietta Maria, a daughter of France. Thus he was the nephew of Madame, whom his mother had dearly loved. Before the war—through his ambassador Pomponne—Louis sent him a letter in which he did his young cousin the signal honour of assuring him of his particular affection. Hereupon, Jan de Witt sought to form an independent army which would not be under the command of one so nearly related to both the French and the English crowns, both of which seemed to incline to make of Orange their puppet ruler of Holland and the usurper of the Republic. Unable to raise Swiss soldiers, because Louis had bought them all, unable to raise Dutch soldiers, because nearly all the fighting men were sailors, de Witt was successful in raising a large body of Germans, with whom he garrisoned as many of the towns as possible.

The opening of the war was easy, the Elector of Cologne, Bishop of Liége, giving to Louis the passages of the Meuse and the Rhine. Town after town fell, the inhabitants forcing the German garrisons to surrender. Louis was Commander-in-Chief; Louvois—going with him as Chief of the Staff—giving daily orders to Turenne* who was the

* Note.—Henri de la Tour, Vicomte de Turenne, was second son of Henri de la Tour Duc de Bouillon, and born at Sedan in 1611. He was the near relative of William of Orange, his mother having been the sister of the Princes Maurice and Frederic Henry of Orange, under which two uncles the young Turenne made his first campaigns and distinguished himself greatly by his bravery.

only real General left after Condé was wounded in the first affair.

The war could have been finished in a week or two had it not been for the incapacity of the Marquis de Rochefort. This man's wife was the mistress of Louvois, for which reason Louvois made him Maréchal de France, and so lost Holland. For, instead of doing as Condé had advised and advancing rapidly, with all the cavalry, to seize the sluices at Muyden, Rochefort stopped at Utrecht. Eventually, only four of his men rode on to Muyden, which place they entered unopposed. Presently the inhabitants, seeing only four mounted men, put them out again and shut the gates. When a hundred and fifty of their comrades came on leisurely to join them, it was too late. Help had come from Amsterdam ; the sluices remained in the hands of the Dutch, and, with them, Holland was saved, upon June 20th, 1672.

In the meantime, Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt, brother of Jan, defeated the English and French fleets on June 7th ; Cornelius, who was ill, sitting throughout the battle in an armchair on the deck of his ship.

The Dutch now sued for peace, but Louis asked almost impossible terms, especially the establishment of the Roman Catholic priest everywhere. To all other terms the States-General agreed, but Louis was not content. The war continuing, both of the de Witts were murdered by a mob of the Orange party, the sluices were opened, the sea-dykes were cut, and Amsterdam was flooded—that is to say, that all the suburbs and country round were flooded with both fresh water and sea water, and remained so for two years. The richest houses and palaces, beautiful gardens, greenhouses, all were submerged. Meanwhile, William of Orange, on June 27th, 1672, demanded, in a cowardly manner, permission from the States-General to make peace upon his own account. An accident alone prevented his doing so, and deserting the country of which he now remained the sole protector. This was the declaration of alliance with Holland of the Elector of Brandenburg,

his kinsman; which alliance soon caused the Emperor Leopold to be drawn into the conflict—also on the side of Holland.

Thus, in the month of September, 1672, Louis, the Conqueror—conquered by the waters in Holland—was obliged to turn his back upon Amsterdam as quickly as possible, and to present a new front—now to the Empire. Turenne was sent across the Rhine, while Condé, who had recovered from his wound, was compelled to cover Alsace.

CHAPTER XXII

Last Campaigns of Turenne

1672—1676

When, in the year 1672, the interference of the Elector of Brandenburg caused Louis to turn southwards the one hundred and twenty thousand men with which he had flooded the helpless country of Holland, the stars in their courses still seemed to fight for him; as usual, however, they did so in vain.

In that year the Turks, who, under the Albanians Mohamed Kiuperli and his son Ahmed Kiuperli, had often ravaged Hungary, had penetrated to Silesia, to Poland. The Emperor Leopold had more than he could do to keep them in check.

Of Mohamed Kiuperli, history has said that he was *homme doux*, a kind-natured man! His kindness can be guessed at from the fact that under the rule of this man, an ex-cook of the Sultan, no less than thirty-six thousand executions took place in five years. He disciplined the Janissaries by extermination until the name of Turk became one indeed to make the Empire tremble before their disciplined ferocity. When Ahmed Kiuperli, with a deluge of Turks and Tartars, paid periodical visits to the north, as far as Silesia, it was principally with the object of making slaves. In one campaign alone he picked up no less than eighty thousand girls and boys. All were consigned to the harems in youth; as the boys grew up they were put into the armies.

From the picture by Latoure.

HENRI DE LA TOUR, VICOMTE DE TURENNE,
Marechal-General des Armées du Roi.

The Moors and inhabitants of the Barbary coast, under the enlightened rule of this well-instructed, literary Vizier, did not neglect to follow suit. In the interests of the Sultan, great captures of women and boys were made by them, especially on the Grecian coasts. Thus, upon one occasion, Ahmed was able to present his master with two thousand beautiful slave-boys as the result of a single razzia by the pirates.

From these facts it is to be seen that the Turks were most redoubtable foes to the Empire, and it would have been well for Louis to leave the Empire to fight them, instead of irritating Leopold and his German subjects beyond endurance.

This, however, he did by allowing Turenne wantonly to invade and ravage Westphalia. Being unsupplied with provisions by Louvois, the great General took his arms where they could find food, and allowed them to turn Westphalia into a barren, howling wilderness. The King, in person with Vauban, the genius of military engineering, who had just sprung into notice, likewise wantonly attacked and destroyed Colmar and other Imperial towns in Germany.

Instead of these foolish actions, had Louis but known how to take advantage of his chances, he could have profited by another element of luck which fortune had thrown in his way, to keep the Emperor otherwise employed than in fighting against himself. This was the good service which the Jesuits were doing the King of France by their religious persecutions in Hungary. By these, Austria was paralysed and unable to take any serious part against the invaders of Holland.

The Austrian Minister Lobkowitz, the friend of France, was the enemy of Hungary. Of his political oppression of that country the Jesuits made a religious oppression. While Lobkowitz caused the execution of the nobles and grandees, the Jesuits opened a crusade, accompanied by armed forces, against the Protestant masses of the people.

It is Michiels, author of the *Cabinet Autrichien*, who,

quoting his Jesuit authorities and the letters of Leopold, gives us the details, learned from themselves, of these terrible persecutions. Every village was surrounded, the Protestant pastors were roasted before slow fires, while women were impaled upon red-hot irons! Troops of men were seized and sold, to become galley-slaves of the Turks and Venetians; while as for the poor women and girls who remained unprotected, who can imagine their fate, among the ignorant Jesuit-led troops, who must have looked upon the heretics as worthy of less consideration than dogs?

Thus were the pious works progressing in Hungary, and it is scarcely matter for surprise if, in many instances, the unhappy Hungarian, seeing the soldiers standing over his wife and children with pointed guns, became touched, and recognised in time the virtues of the Roman Catholic religion!

The unnecessary brutality of Turenne in Westphalia, the aggression of the King at Colmar, forced the German Jesuits to sacrifice Lobkowitz, to demand from Leopold retaliation against France.

Thus Louis had succeeded in causing an alliance of these bigoted Catholics with Protestant Holland against himself. Catholic Spain also was on the Dutch side, Holland fighting alongside her troops in the Low Countries. It was not long before the Emperor Leopold might have been seen in person bare-footed, crucifix in hand, making a pilgrimage to Saint-Maria of Zell, and preaching to his army against France. Thus the crusade which Louis XIV. had inaugurated against Protestantism had, by his egregious mismanagement, become transformed into a crusade of Catholics against himself.

Meanwhile, the horrible methods of the Thirty Years' War, the methods of the cruel brigand Waldstein, were to be seen revived in Holland as well as in Westphalia.

The Duc de Luxembourg, the French General, had attempted to seize The Hague. Finding the ice everywhere breaking beneath the feet of his horses and men, he with difficulty withdrew as far as the province of Utrecht, where,

for seventeen months, he maintained himself by horrible pillage—organised brigandage. While raising collective contributions of money from townships and villages, this brutal commander seized also individuals—and all means were exerted to make them deliver up such cash as they possessed. The homes of the peaceful and submitted inhabitants were treated as if at the sack of a city. That the convenience of his army might be the better considered, Luxembourg ordered the abolition of all keys to the houses. Thus his soldiers were enabled to enter them at any hour of the night without let or hindrance, and treat the occupants, male and female, and their belongings, absolutely as their own, to do what they liked with. Such were the methods of the civilised armies of Louis XIV. in 1672 and later! No wonder that the crusade against him became a savage actuality!

Before long we find the young William of Orange, now Stadtholder for life, at the head of mixed Catholic and Protestant armies. The torture of Cornelius de Witt, his subsequent death, and that of his brother Jan de Witt, had deliberately not been prevented by him. William told Gourville, the great French financier, years afterwards, that he had personally done nothing towards the murders, but that he had felt himself considerably relieved by the removal of the two brothers from his path.

In 1673 the Prince of Orange was firmly established as head of the Dutch, and no longer could any offers from his kinsman Louis affect him. Yet such were made, Louis actually addressing himself to Orange—to the Dutch Protestants, and also to the Hungarian Protestants—to aid him in his old designs, the spoliation of the Catholic Spaniard. He deceived the Hungarian Calvinists by promising them help; but all the help he gave them was to strike a medal, upon which he described himself as Liberator of the Hungarians!

William of Orange, meanwhile, instead of aiding Louis to attack the Spanish towns in the Low Countries, protected these from the French King. That very clever tactician the Austrian General Montecuculli, joined him, and before

long Orange, as Commander-in-Chief of the mixed forces, was master of the Rhine, master also of the communications between Holland, the Low Countries and Germany.

In the year 1674, in the month of August, a most terrible battle occurred. To be more correct, two battles were fought upon the same day, at Senef, between William, with his troops of all nations, and a powerful French army, under Condé.

At Senef Condé showed all his old furious valour—reckless as ever of his own life, he had three horses killed under him. But the mountain of hate, the furious indignation of the collected enemies, was so great, so determined, that he found it impossible to make them yield. Three times on the morning of that August 11th were the heterogeneous ranks of the allies broken. Condé and the French thought themselves victorious when, to their astonishment, they found that the allies had taken up a better position, and were ready to renew the battle. Many, that day, were the Frenchmen fighting also on the side of Holland. All of the loose population of the country, the false Holland, which had at the beginning of the war rallied to the standard of Orange, were present, striving gallantly against their countrymen. The commander of the Austrians was M. de Souches, likewise a Frenchman. Eight thousand fell, upon each side, on this bloody day ; the only advantage gained by Condé, at the end of it, was to remain upon the field of battle to bury the dead. The military equality of both sides was demonstrated by this battle, although—owing to the genius of Vauban, his new methods of bombardment, his systems of attack under cover and defence upon scientific lines—Louis became very successful in his sieges, retaking all the cities of Franche Comté which he had lost.

And thus the war raged on, with increasing horrors, one of the greatest of which was the calculated destruction of the whole of the Palatinate by Turenne.

For a whole year Turenne remained the master of the Rhine ; indeed, throughout the whole of this long campaign

this great tactician proved himself to be the worthy successor of Gustavus Adolphus. His army and himself were one. Devoted to their leader, on account of the freedom he allowed them in the matter of pillage, he could place absolute reliance upon his followers, all disciplined to the highest degree.

This inter-reliance it was which enabled Turenne, by a master-stroke, to re-possess himself of Alsace in the last days of 1674 and first days of 1675. He had lulled the enemies' suspicions by separating his forces in all directions, when, according to agreement, through winter torrents and snow and ice, over the passes of the Vosges, they all reunited with the greatest exactitude upon the appointed day, December 27th. Falling in mass upon the astonished enemy, by January 11th there was not one of the allies left in Alsace—all the survivors had been driven back over the Rhine.

In July that same year, when Turenne was face to face with Montecuculli, for what seemed likely to be the decisive blow, his end came. While making his last reconnaissance of the Imperial batteries at Saspach previous to his attack, the great commander was jubilantly sure of success. "*Je les tiens!*" he exclaimed gaily. Directly afterwards a cannon-ball knocked him off his horse. Turenne was dead!

His death cost France three thousand men during the next two days, and general discouragement throughout the army and the nation alike. For—despite the pretence of the omnipotence of the King—all knew that the great Maréchal had been the real spirit of the war, the one reliable commander.

Had it not been for the fact that the Swedes in French pay fought, to the last man, against the onslaughts of the Elector Palatine, France would have been invaded in the north. The Swedes were killed—but France was saved when the united Danes and German Princes weakened themselves by attacking them.

Louis in person, with fifty thousand men, found himself face to face with Orange, with only thirty-five thousand,

not long after the death of Turenne. It was in front of Bouchain, and all was in favour of the King. However, while the army waited, he allowed himself to be persuaded by some of the officers of his staff not to risk his precious life in an attack. Among these, the Marquis de la Feuillade, with tears in his eyes, kissed the King's boots—begging him to be careful. M. de Lorges, however, recently appointed Maréchal, asked to be allowed to charge, saying he would be answerable for the success of the day. *Dieudonné* Louis preferred the advice of Feuillade. He did not fight, and his not doing so was the cause of his great humiliation.

A day or two later a herald came from the Prince of Orange, who had meanwhile been reinforced, with a message to M. de Lorges. The message was to the effect that William had pleasure in admitting that he had been very frightened, that if he had been attacked he must have been lost—driven into the River Scarpe.

By mistake, the herald delivered the message to the King before all his staff. In disgust and in a rage Louis left the army for Paris, in July, 1676.

While war had been raging thus for several years, and Louis had been playing at times at being Commander-in-Chief, Colbert had been seeing the ruin of the country and his plans in all directions. Further—when all was starvation everywhere, and the poor people throughout the land so thin as to justify the name of "frogs of France" already given to them for that reason by the English soldiers—Colbert was ordered to find more and more money. When the last order came, and it was for sixty millions of crowns, he declared his inability to raise so much. The master's reply was, "Raise it, or I will find some one else who will." The money was found by employing all the old methods of Mazarin and Fouquet.

How some of it was employed can be understood from the fact that Athénaïs de Montespan lost at cards, upon one night only, so much as seven hundred thousand crowns. A tax was now placed upon tobacco for the benefit of this spendthrift Marquise de Montespan; at the same time

many other new taxes were invented, such as one upon the little stalls employed by the hawkers and fish-sellers. Soon there were revolts, especially in Guyenne and Brittany, which were ruthlessly put down. First, to restore confidence, the taxes were removed, then troops were sent and people hanged and broken upon the wheel by the hundred. Colbert soon had plenty of convicts for galley-slaves, than which no present could ever be more acceptable to him. The country magistracy, knowing this, in their anxiety to please the navy-creating Minister, condemned men to the galleys for life upon the most frivolous pretexts, and then wrote for approbation, which they obtained.

The hanging and breaking on the wheel could not, unfortunately, restore the trade which Colbert had introduced and fostered. Amid the general desolation, caused by the war and the retaliatory measures of foreign nations, the port of Bordeaux was now ruined completely. As many as twelve hundred foreign vessels visiting the port had to leave it again without any cargo. Thus was the Government destroying the country, in the present and for the future.

While Madame de Montespan was gaily eating and drinking at the Court—and she could surpass the King in both, which is saying a great deal—there was another *bon-vivant* there by her side, one who, later on, became indirectly the cause of the death of the gallant Ruyter. This was Vivonne, the brother of Athénaïs. This young gentleman was an agreeable courtier, a lazy epicurean, a great eater, a great sleeper, and as light in his morals as any man in France—not excepting the King, whom he treated as his brother-in-law.

A revolt against Spain having occurred in the town of Messina, in Sicily, the place offered itself to France. By a little careful management, the whole of Sicily might have been won over. The King, who has so often been praised for his perfect tact and knowledge of men, named, as the Viceroy of this kingdom which he had not got, this debauched specimen of humanity. Apparently he thought

that the merits of Vivonne's light style of conversation would be likely to strike the Sicilians as admirably replacing the gravity of the Spaniards. They were, at all events, the only merits that he possessed, other than that of being the brother of Athénaïs.

While events were so shaping themselves in France, the foolish action of Louis towards his pensioned slave, Charles of England, had been bearing fruit across the Channel. Owing to his having given to James, Duke of York, as his second wife with a large dowry, the niece of Mazarin, Mary of Modena, Louis had more than ever attracted the attention of the English Parliament to his views for the conversion of England. For the palace of the Duke of York became the meeting-place of French and English Jesuits, while Coleman, the secretary of the Duchess, was discovered before long to be engaged in a conspiracy. The displeasure of the English Parliament and the people towards Louis was shown by their insisting upon Charles concluding a peace with Holland in 1674. Then the nation insisted upon his declaring war upon France. While Charles contrived to obtain money from the Parliament wherewith to fight France, he did not declare war against his cousin. For all the time he continued to receive enormous sums from Louis. Thus, while pretending to his country that he was only awaiting a favourable opportunity to attack, all that this most unreliable member of the Stuarts was waiting for was the next large subsidy from the King of France.

CHAPTER XXIII

The King's Mistress and the Governess

1667—1678

THE reign of the Marquise de Montespan lasted, roughly speaking, for ten years, from 1667 to 1677. During that time she bore to Louis six or seven children, the eldest of whom was the Duc de Maine. This son seemed rather to take after her husband's family than to resemble the King.* It will be remembered that the Marquis de Montespan, by whom Athénaïs had already had a son and a daughter before she became the King's mistress, was the grandson of Zamet the Moor, the buffoon and boon companion of Henri IV. The young Duc de Maine appears to have inherited the buffoonery of this Zamet, rather than the attributes of the Bourbon line. The child was unhealthy, bandy-legged, and spiteful, had the Gascon nature of the Marquis, was facetious, roguish, and shrewd, malicious to a degree.

Above all, the little boy had the cunning prudence of his governess, Madame Scarron, the widow of the witty Abbé Scarron, author of the *Roman Comique*. Her character—according to an old writer, "was dry, marked by equality of temperament, and decent. She varied little, usually pursuing a course of moderation in all matters."

Madame Scarron, whatever her character, was thoroughly capable of judging in what manner best unobtrusively to work for her own advantage. This lady, who before long we shall find installed as Madame de Maintenon, the King's

* NOTE.—What is known as telegony, or the influence of a first sire, is frequently seen in the animal world.

mistress, had attached herself to the Cabal, the bigoted ladies of the Hôtel Richelieu, to Lamoignon and the Intendant Desmarets, the writer of the absurd sentimental trash which formulated the more modern tenets of Illuminism. She was pretty and she was poor, and—as she posed for a prude—the widow Scarron had been selected by the Cabal as the suitable instrument to the King's conversion, whenever the occasion should arise for such a laudable eventuality.

Before we go into the widow Scarron's antecedents, it will be well to glance at the situation at the Court, where this scheming lady had obtained so firm a foothold. This foothold, it seems probable, had been partly obtained long before the days when she became governess, first to the Duc de Maine, and then a second mother to all of the other illegitimate children of Athénaïs. For it may be remembered that, in the days of Mazarin, and, until his own fall in September, 1661, Fouquet, the Finance Minister of the Cardinal, had regularly expended vast sums for his secret police, and, while the nobility were the principal recipients of these bounties, there were others. Among the names registered in Fouquet's list for a large annual pension appeared that of Scarron. The inference is, that this was at least as much on account of secret services rendered by the young and pretty wife of the crippled writer, as for any use that could be made of himself, tied as he always was to his armchair.

The daily journals kept by the Court physicians of the King's health, which were commenced by the order of Henri IV. at the birth of his son Louis XIII., were continued in a similar manner during the life of Louis XIV. From these, it is evident that this latter, even from a comparatively early age, never enjoyed robust health. He suffered from black bile, from fits of vapours, from secret sorrows and desires for solitude, even before the persistent acidity in his blood brought on—later—tumours, caries, gout and fistula. During the ten years of his intimate relations with the efflorescent Athénaïs, the Marquise was a real

cause of health disturbance to the King. She caused his life to be agitated unduly ; it was rendered bitter, owing to her malicious archness ; towards the end of her term of sovereignty his existence, through her constant wearing upon him, became nauseous.

Upon his return to Paris, after having shown the white feather before William of Orange at Bouchain, in July, 1676, her mocking laughter became unbearable to Louis. Already both Court and people alike had begun to find the King's mistress, with her opulent charms and arbitrary ways, almost more than they could stand. When Turenne fell, the people openly cried, " It is to her that we owe this ! " while the Ministers both feared and detested her sharp, witty tongue, and were worn out, from being continually compelled by the King to come and work in her apartments and presence.

Her power over the Ministers was excessive. The violent, red-faced, War Minister, Louvois, who trampled all else, even Turenne, underfoot, was made by Athénaïs to sit up like a poodle, or walk like one on its hind legs, when instructed by the aid of a stick. Colbert, too, was as wax in her hands. Him she held through his son's affections—the amiable Marquise having given her sister to this latter as his mistress.

The proof of this power was made evident for the benefit of her brother, the indolent sybarite Vivonne, who had been made Viceroy in Sicily only to allow the general pillage of the inhabitants by his retinue. Moreover, he not only left unchecked the abuses of his people towards the women of the island, but himself led a most dissolute life in Messina. Already were the Sicilians—justly angered by Vivonne's interference with the sanctity of their homes—calling back the Spaniards to rid them of this pest, when there was question of the appointment of a certain number of new Maréchals de France.

Louvois was present with the King when Athénaïs, rummaging in the pockets of Louis, pulled out the paper with the list of names. There were seven names on the

paper. The Marquise read them out one after another. When she got to the end, turning to Louvois, she remarked calmly, "I do not see my brother's name! Where is it?" Full of apologies, Louvois declared that it was an oversight—that he had forgotten the name of Vivonne. Taking the paper from the plump hand of Madame de Montespan, the Minister hurriedly repaired the omission. Thus Vivonne became Maréchal de France.

So casual, however, was her brother, so *dégagé* in his bearing towards Louis, whom he treated as his brother-in-law, that it was two months at least, after he had received his appointment, before the newly appointed Maréchal summoned up sufficient energy to take his pen and sit down to write "Thank you" to his Monarch for the honour which had been done him.

It is not much wonder if the time for the King's conversion seemed to be near at hand, even to himself. It was more apparent still when the continued irregularities of Vivonne—and the knowledge that his incapacity had made no preparations for defence—rendered necessary the sending of a fleet to his assistance.

The Spaniards, aided by the gallant Ruyter, were about to attack Messina, when Colbert contrived to obtain the sanction of Louis to the employment of an uncompromising Calvinist in command of the fleet in the Mediterranean. This was Duquesne, the terror of the Turks, who said of him that "he had been forgotten by the angel of death."

In the terrible sea battle which took place under the shadow of Mount Etna the good, the great Ruyter had one leg shot off and the other smashed by a cannon shot. Nevertheless, he continued giving his orders to the fleet until he died. Vivonne only deigned to issue from the port, and lend assistance, after the death of the noble Dutch Admiral had already spread consternation and dismay among the mixed Dutch and Spanish war ships. It was a victory for France, but rendered useless by the continued ill-treatment of the Sicilians by the worthless brother of the Marquise de Montespan.

The ill-humour of the King becoming known, the eloquent Bossuet, prompted thereto by the confessor of Louis, Père la Chaise, persuaded him to send "la Montespan" away. He did so in the year of his jubilee, 1676, greatly to the delight of the excellent ladies of the religious Cabal, who perceived now that the elements of saving grace in the widow Scarron were being fully appreciated by the reformed Monarch.

Not for many months, however, was their triumph to endure ere the backsliding of the converted Majesty gave rise to a terrible scandal, which made them ridiculous and cut them to the quick.

When the devotions of the jubilee were over and done with, the question arose whether or no "la Montespan"—the mother of the numerous progeny being so excellently trained by the virtuous governess—should be allowed to show her face again at Court. The good Bishop Bossuet gave it as his opinion that it would not do to be too hard upon the lady—that no possible harm could ensue if the King were allowed to have an interview with his ex-mistress, in the presence of the Duchesse de Richelieu and the other great ladies of the devout Cabal.

The interview took place, as arranged, upon August 4th, 1676, all the respectable ladies being present. With great apparent humility the King exchanged a few words in a low tone with Athénaïs, who, although now nearly forty, was looking handsomer than ever. With equal humility and bowed head the Marquise replied in almost inaudible tones to the converted Louis. Suddenly, with a grave reverence to the ladies assembled, the rascally Louis took Athénaïs by the hand and, leaving all the ladies to their astonishment, led her away to a private apartment. The scandal was enormous! Of this renewal of intimacy between the King and the Marquise was born the last of her daughters. This daughter lived to become the wife of the Duc d'Orléans, the Regent, who always called her *Madame Satan*. By Europe at large this daughter of Montespan was nicknamed *La fille du jubilé*.

That the heart of Louis was converted after all, the good people of the Cabal had an opportunity of perceiving by the 28th of that same month of August, 1676. By this time the King had become ashamed of himself for his backslidings, especially as he really was very tired of "la Montespan," after all. Accordingly—as an act of devotion and penitence—he delighted the hearts of the Cabal, and consoled the injured feelings of Bossuet and the other Bishops, by according them a favour.

The King ordained that, in future, the children of Protestants who had forcibly been abducted from their parents, should no longer be permitted the privilege of seeing their parents through the bars of the *grille* in the convents where they were confined. Thus had the holy cause of Catholicism profited, after all, in France by this momentary return of weakness of the King of France for his old love.

Fortunately for England, he was not so successful there in his schemes for conversion by force. For the nation had got to understand Charles by this time, to know that his traitorous schemes were dictated by Louis, that the imposition of the Catholic religion upon Great Britain was all that was aimed at by one and the other.

Thus, upon January 10th, 1678, the Parliament forced Charles II., sadly against his will, to sign a treaty of alliance with Holland, by the terms of which an English army was to help the Dutch against France. Nor was Louis more successful with the Prince of Orange. Although he offered this young Prince one of his bastard daughters to wife, the offer was declined with thanks, while William invaded Flanders. Here, however, he was not able to remain long, as Louis, taking Vauban with him, was able to capture in succession Valenciennes, Cambrai, and Saint-Omer. It was chiefly because, at the same time, Créqui made a howling wilderness of Alsace—as Turenne had devastated Westphalia in 1673, and laid the Palatinate in waste and ruins in 1675—that the English were determined to force Charles to join the Dutch. A timely present,

of six millions of crowns, from Louis to the English King enabled him, however, once more to betray his country, in the interests of his cousin of France. Having all this money in hand, he disbanded his army !

The Dutch now discovered the duplicity of the Prince of Orange, who was treating with Charles II. and, although probably only to deceive that King, promising to help him against his subjects. Therefore, they determined to come to terms with Louis, whose arms had now reached Brussels.

To the rage of William, peace was signed at Nimeguen at midnight on August 10th, 1678. This peace not having been officially made known to Orange, although he was aware of it, he traitorously attacked the French General, Luxembourg, upon the 14th. In the surprise, he killed quantities of men, but was eventually repulsed.

Before the signing of this peace, by which Louis treacherously left both the Hungarians, whom he had encouraged, and the Sicilians to the dire vengeance of their foes, the French King had in his previous negotiations endeavoured to establish two things. These were, first, the commercial superiority of France, the industrial supremacy aimed at by Colbert ; secondly, the establishment of the Roman Catholic religion in Holland.

The former had to be entirely abandoned. Colbert's schemes were ruined, the national industries were ruined, by the wholesale reintroduction of foreign merchandise. Further, the King let go by the board the commercial companies which Colbert had established to trade with both the East and West Indies, since the Dutch now had liberty to go there too.

The religious crusade also, whether in Holland or in England, had to be abandoned completely. In the former country liberty of conscience remained unimpaired ; in the latter, the Catholics were removed from all employment by the Test Act, while the Duke of York—who had announced himself a Catholic—was declared to be excluded from the succession to the Crown.

Despite this utter failure of the original policy of either

Louis or Colbert, Europe at large admired and glorified the King of France as a great and glorious King. For—owing to the marvels accomplished by the clever engineer Vauban in taking so many cities—he remained, at the end of the war, in possession of Franche Comté. The Emperor also abandoned Lorraine, which remained in the hands of Louis. The War Minister, Louvois, had therefore ample cause to feel satisfied with himself at the end of this long and bloody succession of campaigns, since he shared with the King the glory—that is to say, nearly all that was obtained. Colbert was the greatest sufferer by the war, since he had neither glory nor anything else to show at the end of it, unless we reckon his ships. Even they, by the union of Holland and England, both great maritime powers, became henceforward valueless. Colbert can, therefore, be considered as having been ruined by his master's glory.

That master, victorious in war, was, however, now once more a willing slave—conquered by the little god of Love. The pious conversations of the charming governess of his illegitimate children had already had their effect upon him before the year of the jubilee. In the preceding year they had moved him to an act of grace. This was to terminate the cruel sufferings of the loving and devoted Louise de la Vallière ; to allow her to retire to a Carmelite convent—there to find, with her God, the peace she had never found with her King, her lover.

Madame Scarron had taken a title—that of Marquise—and had bought a nice little property called Maintenon. To keep it up with, she started with a modest income of two hundred thousand *livres* yearly. The treason of Athénaïs de Montespan, who had deceived her bosom friend la Vallière and turned her almost into her servant, was punished. It was an almost poetical justice which caused her to be deceived in turn by her own governess—which established the guardian of her children, first as the mistress and later the wife of the great and glorious Louis XIV., King of France !

CHAPTER XXIV

Scarron and Early Days of De Maintenon

1635—1660

"SCARRON, by the grace of God, unworthy sick man of the Queen." Such was the official title by which her Majesty Anne of Austria accepted the services of that crippled buffoon the author of the *Roman Comique*. The title was invented by himself, and he maintained, with a melancholy gaiety, that no courtier fulfilled his duties more conscientiously.

Day after day, installed in an armchair, covered with a rug, and holding in his hand a little stick wherewith to scratch himself, might the witty poet have been seen basking in the Royal favour. Scarcely ever free from pain, yet never ceasing to jest with merry buffoonery, the afflicted *abbé* was the wonder of his age.

When the lively Queen Christine of Sweden came to Paris and wished to see Scarron, he was presented to her, sitting thus in his armchair. "I permit you," said this Princess of light manners, "to fall in love with me. The Queen of France has created you her sick man—I make you my Roland." "You do well, Madame," replied Scarron, "to invest me with that title, since otherwise I should have taken it."

The authority for the above is Tallemant des Réaux in his *Historiettes*.

In a burlesque written by Scarron, called *Don Japhet d'Arménie*, which was performed for a long time upon

the stage, the following quaint lines figure in the poet's dedication to the King: "I will try to persuade your Majesty that you cannot go far wrong by helping me a little. I should become more gay than I am; if I were more gay than I am, I should make humorous comedies; if I made humorous comedies, your Majesty would be diverted; if your Majesty were diverted, your Majesty's money would not be wasted. All this follows so logically that it seems to me that I should be persuaded, if only I were as great a king as I am an unfortunate wretch."

From the above it may be seen that Scarron was never above openly begging. Indeed, he lived by it, and often, when his fulsome dedications did not bring the expected *douceur* from the great nobles to whom he had addressed them, he would set to and abuse roundly, in some scathing publication, the object of his previous praise.

For twenty-two years was Paul Scarron tied to his armchair, in which he was carried to the church when he took as his bride Françoise d'Aubigné, upon July 2nd, 1652. Thirty-four years later—after having for long been known as Madame de Maintenon—the same lady was privately married to Louis XIV., there being four witnesses to the marriage.

It was not always that Scarron, the only successful burlesque writer of France, had been a cripple. In his youth he was young and gay, handsome and well made. Having been deprived of his patrimony by his father's second marriage, he became an *abbé* and was successful in obtaining a canonry of Mans. Like many other *abbés* before the days of the Revolution in France, the title carried little ecclesiastical with it save the dress. Many a tutor and man of letters was an *abbé* who never entered holy orders. The costume, consisting of a shovel hat and brown or violet coat, was not unbecoming, especially to a handsome young fellow. Paul Scarron, at all events, found at an early age that it by no means debarred him from becoming the pet of the ladies. Among those who openly displayed a predilection for the clever-tongued

young *Chanoine* were those queens of gallantry Ninon de Lenclos and Marion Delorme.

Various stories are related as to the manner in which the young man became attacked with the terrible maladies which left him half paralysed for the rest of his life. One of them is that given by la Beaumelle, who says that it was owing to a freak, at Carnival time, when present at his canonry at Mans.

With several other young men, the merry *Chanoine* indulged in an extraordinary prank, which at all events had the merit of not disgracing the priestly garb. Smearing themselves all over with honey, they rolled themselves in feathers, after which the band, looking like glorified fowls, started running about the streets. The other giddy Carnival frolickers of Mans pursued the young men—*and plucked them*! They had no refuge in which to hide their nudity save the reeds on the banks of the river Sarthe. The weather was bitterly cold, and, while the other three young men died as the result of their exposure, Scarron became a cripple for life.

Under these miserable circumstances, instead of giving way to grief, Scarron defied fate. He elected to laugh in the face of the evil destiny which had struck him down, and, of his unmeasured laughter, discovered the means to live, not only in the present, but in the future memory of man.

There remained, fortunately, a biting and lively wit to the mis-shapen body, and this wit, as if to console the body, attacked everything that was considered great and fine in antiquity. When, in most excellent verse, he travestied the *Æneid* of Virgil, first the world was astounded at his daring, then it laughed in fits. From that moment, in his burlesque pen, Scarron had found the means to preserve himself from want. For he had become the licensed jester of the world.

That he himself realised the pinnacle of fame to which he had sprung is shown by his replies to the notary upon the occasion of his marriage to the penniless young beauty

whom—chiefly out of compassion—he took more as a *garde-malade* than a wife.

Asked to name the amount, to be inscribed in the contract, of the dowry which the young girl brought him, he said, "Write, two very mischievous eyes, a fine bust, a pair of well-shaped hands, and plenty of wit."

Asked, again, what endowment he brought to Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, his reply was not conspicuous for an excess of modesty. "Immortality," replied the poet. "The names of many of the wives of Kings die with them; that of the wife of Scarron will never die!"

Poor Scarron! Could but his humour-loving spirit have returned some twenty years later from the land of Shades, it would have been the first to laugh sardonically at the way in which the immortality of the name of Scarron's wife had been attained—as a Marquise de Maintenon!

Having traced the career of the mirth-creating paralytic, it is now time to turn to that of his spouse.

Françoise d'Aubigné was the daughter of Protestant parents, Constant d'Aubigné and Anne de Cardillac. Her grandfather was that Théodore Agrippa d'Aubigné of whom Henri de Navarre made for long a friend, to treat him eventually with base ingratitude.

She was born in a prison at Niort, upon November 27th, 1635, and at the age of three years taken by her parents, upon their release, to the New World. Here, by the carelessness of a nurse, she was nearly killed by a rattlesnake. When—at the age of twelve—the young Françoise was brought back to France, her aunt Madame de Villette took her to bring her up in the Protestant Faith. She had, however, a godmother, Madame de Neuillant, who, to pay court to Anne of Austria, obtained an order to take the young girl and bring her up as a Catholic. Françoise resisted, whereupon her lot became a hard one, chastisements not being spared. The worthy Père Christian tells us that "the young lady was forced to consort with the domestics and to perform the most menial duties." She herself says,

"I was in command in the areas, and that is how my reign commenced."

Later on, she was confined in the Ursuline Convent at Niort, where the nuns found means to induce the girl to abjure the Protestant religion. Thereupon Madame de Villette refused to pay for her keep, when Madame de Neuillant, taking her out of the convent, sent her back to her mother, who died shortly afterwards in great poverty. For a time she again suffered neglect and ill-treatment from Madame de Neuillant, at Angers, until the Chevalier de Méré rescued her from that hard-hearted godmother's clutches. This gentleman sent her with a letter to his friend the Comtesse d'Olonne, in Paris, who took Mademoiselle d'Aubigné as her *demoiselle de compagnie.*

At first she found a happy home with the Comtesse, who, calling Françoise her "little Indian," made of the girl an inseparable companion. Unfortunately, Madame d'Olonne was vain and jealous; when, therefore, she found that the little Indian's good looks were being unduly appreciated, she relegated the girl to solitude in the attics of her hôtel, and took her out into the world no more.

Now it was that a young man named Fadio Lamorinière appeared upon the scene—a wealthy young fellow, who was supposed to have come from Nantes to follow a course of philosophy at the Collège des Grassins. Fadio followed the young *demoiselle de compagnie* home from the church in the Rue des Tournelles. He soon contrived to obtain from the *concierge* of the hôtel of the Comtesse a room in the building. This—according to the custom of that day—the doorkeeper had the privilege of letting, as there were many rooms unoccupied. The room was in the top of the house, opposite that of the neglected Françoise d'Aubigné.

Solitude and opportunity have been evil factors in many a young girl's life! They were so in that of Françoise d'Aubigné. She became the mistress of the young man—who had only installed himself under the same roof with the intention of effecting her seduction.

It was when Fadio Lamorinière had gone away to Nantes to see his dying mother that the Maréchale de la Ferté went one day with the Comtesse d'Olonne to pay a visit to Scarron. The former of the two ladies appears to have suggested to the poet that there was a young lady hidden away somewhere at the top of her friend's hôtel who would make him a charming wife. If this is true, it is the only good turn which Madame de la Ferté ever did to Madame de Maintenon—of whom she used afterwards to assert that she had not one but six liaisons before her marriage.

Scarron was very kind to Mademoiselle d'Aubigné, whose hard lot he pitied. One day he took her on one side and said, "A young lady nowadays has no other resource than the convent or marriage. Should you prefer the convent, I will pay your dowry for you. On the other hand, should you prefer an establishment of your own, well, here is Paul Scarron with an ugly face and other disadvantages—including a limited income."

Françoise replied that she preferred Paul Scarron and his armchair to the stricter celibacy of the convent. And thus she became the wife of the cripple.

Shortly after her marriage Fadio Lamorinière reappeared upon the scene, when by some means he contrived to install himself under the sick man's roof as his valet, in the Breton name of Alain Kerbrack. By this means, although the well-to-do young *bourgeois* had once more gained access to his mistress, he soon found that he had let himself in for more than he bargained for. Scarron was ill-tempered and *exigeant* with Alain Kerbrack, who soon began to neglect both his master and his beloved Françoise. Frequently would Alain absent himself for hours, during which time he amused himself in the town like any other young gentleman, dressed in his ordinary clothes. It was an *avocat* of Paris, M. de Mollevaux, who, one day meeting the young spark, with a girl upon his arm, parading along the banks of the Seine, recognised him. He told Scarron. When Alain Kerbrack returned that day, in lackey's livery,

the game was up! M. Lamorinière stood before the afflicted Scarron as the man who had robbed him of his honour—who had evidently also been his wife's lover before her marriage.

The poet sent the young man away on the spot, jocularly but not unkindly telling him that perhaps it would be as wise if he left the house without bidding adieu to his mistress—he might not perhaps be well received. Fadio understood that he had been seen, and that Madame Scarron had already heard from Mollevaux that he had not been alone. He took the hint, and retired without ever seeing Françoise again.

The house of Scarron became the resort of all the brilliant society of Paris, and it is to be feared that, in those days of light behaviour, but too many of the nobles paid successful court to the pretty and attractive wife of the man who scarcely lived save in his head and hands.

That later, when she had contrived to fill the place so ardently desired—had become Marquise de Maintenon, and, upon the Queen's death, the King's wife—Françoise banished all inclinations towards gallantry from her *répertoire* we can well believe. For she had attained all that ambition could give her, and ambition and love of pleasure seldom walk long hand in hand. Moreover, Madame de Maintenon was no longer young when she became the King's mistress, to begin with, and far less so when she became an uncrowned Queen.

In the days of her first marriage, however, her conduct was not so regular, and it was an open secret in Paris that Ninon de Lenclos allowed her friend to make use of her house for her assignations. For Ninon de Lenclos, that wonderful lady who continued to retain all the graces—and the vices—of a young woman until past seventy years of age, was the friend of Madame Scarron, as she had been, years previously, more than the friend of her husband. A nice friend, indeed, for a young married woman whose spouse was unable to watch her proceedings!

Nevertheless, that the poor man was not unaware of

the repeated acts of faithlessness on the part of his wife was made only too evident, by some forcible and witty lines which he published concerning her in a song. The verses are, however, too coarse for repetition in these more refined days.

The visitors to the house of Scarron included such men as Turenne and Mignard, M. de Villars, the Comte d'Estrées, and the profligate Cardinal de Retz. Madame de Sévigné, Madame de la Sablière, the Comtesse de Lude, and, as we said, Ninon de Lenclos were among the women. The last of the list of half a dozen lovers cited as the successors of Fadio Lamorinière was the Vicomte Charles de Beuvron. His name is worth recording, since it recalls an instance of Scarron's magnanimity and wit.

Owing to the poet's severe illness, Françoise had been for some time debarred from the pleasure of meeting M. de Beuvron in the hôtel of Ninon de Lenclos.

The young Vicomte called at Scarron's house one day, when the news of the poet's improved health gave auguries of renewed moments of happiness near at hand for the lovers. When the cripple was not looking, he pressed into the lady's hand a letter, which, unfortunately, dropped from her pocket to the floor as she accompanied de Beuvron to the door. Scarron reached the letter with his stick, and, before the return of his pretty young wife, he had read the following lines :

"Chère amie,—

"Enfin elles vont donc revenir, nos heures de *dellices* ! Si de ton côté, depuis quinze jours, tu as amassé autant de trésors de *flame* que moi, nous risquons, ma vie, de nous consumer réciproquement. On ne retrouvera plus que nos cendres. A midi n'est-ce pas ? Sois exacte.

"Ton Charles."

When Françoise came back into the room, her husband handed her the note, saying, drily: "It is not so bad so far as style goes, but it sins in the spelling. You had better tell

M. de Beuvron that *délices* only takes one 'l,' while he has forgotten an ' m ' in flamme ! "

Such was the sole reproof that his wife received. It is probable—since the story became known—that Scarron told it to every one himself. He was evidently above petty jealousies, and, above all, would not miss the opportunity of a joke for anything.

When he was dying, upon October 14th, 1660, he gasped out, between fits of a distressing cough, " Oh ! if only I pull through this, what a fine satire I will write upon the hiccoughs."

His last words were, to those weeping around his deathbed : " My friends, I shall never make you weep half so much as I have made you laugh."

His young wife survived—to become the pet of the Cabal, the governess of Montespan's children, and, in her old age, a powerful sovereign, before whom the noblest dignitaries of Church and State alike, bowed their heads in all humility.

CHAPTER XXV

Rise and Death of Mademoiselle de Fontanges

1679—1681

It was in the year 1675 that la Vallière was allowed to retire into a convent, and that Madame Scarron blossomed out into the Marquise de Maintenon, while still remaining nominally nothing but the governess of the King's children by the Marquise de Montespan. Nevertheless, Madame de Maintenon had commenced to assume her empire over the heart of Louis even before the temporary separation from Athénaïs in the year of the jubilee, a separation which did not become absolutely final until long after that lady's return to favour in August, 1676. The prudish airs, the studied reserve, which the governess had considered it becoming to her to affect from the time of her alliance with the devout ladies of the Cabal, only had the effect of increasing the King's ardour towards her. The apparent modesty of the lady, her scruples of conscience, made the pursuit all the more interesting, until, at length, Louis would brook no denial. Nor did any scruples with regard to the mean part which she was playing towards her benefactress, Madame de Montespan, restrain the widow of Scarron from stepping into her shoes. Far from it, that was a deed of devotion, a good and saintly action, since it removed from the King the reproach of living in open sin with a married woman. For all that, Madame de Maintenon was considerably troubled when she knew that no one could

FRANÇOISE D'AUBIGNÉ,
Marquise de Maintenon.

LOUISE DE LA VALLIÈRE.

any longer have any doubts as to the real position of affairs. From the saintly attitude which she had taken up, to pass suddenly to another and altogether contrary *rôle* was, she felt, to make herself appear ridiculous. Madame de Maintenon appreciated, not without a certain sense of shame, that in her very elevation there was a fall. Therefore, while thanking God for the grandeur thrust upon her, she yet did so with a tear of humiliation for that lost respectability to which she had attained by the striking contrast she had, in later years, offered to Athénaïs de Montespan.

Whatever had been the escapades of her early youth, with her maturer years had come a hardness, a coldness of nature. Time, indeed, had developed in Françoise, once *la belle Indienne*, a calculating steadiness, in which one sees little of the trusting fondness of a woman's heart—as exemplified by la Vallière—nothing of the unruly passion displayed by the luxuriant Montespan.

Possessing neither of these attributes, when the position was won and ambition gratified, she carefully laid out for herself a course to follow, and she followed it with success. This was not to contradict the King, not to foil him or irritate him with reproaches, even should he occasionally develop undesirable lapses from the paths of virtue; ever to allow him free rein in the pursuit of his pleasant vices, to submit to his will. Thus, in the same way as Colbert was obliged to bow his head in submission when Louis destroyed Versailles and ordered its rebuilding, at a cost of a hundred millions, so was the ambitious woman compelled to go with the times. She too had to bow her head, to cease from her nightly instruction in religious matters—from six to ten each evening in *tête-à-tête* seclusion—whenever a passing whim inclined the King to a Madame de Soubise or a Mademoiselle de Fontanges.

Both Madame de Soubise and Mademoiselle de Fontanges were dazzling blondes. Both, although beautiful, died of inherent vices of the blood. The former died of scrofula, her very bones being eaten away. The latter, when but

a child, withered away and went to pieces almost before the eyes of the lookers-on. From a beautiful blooming rosebud, suddenly she became a living corpse. Poor child! it was not long before she became a real one.

"La Soubise" was only an occasional caprice of the King. Occasionally he used to send for her to the palace, when, very tranquilly, she would leave her complaisant and sleeping husband, to obey her sovereign's command. Although the Cardinal de Rohan, so celebrated for his beautiful complexion, was credited with being her son by the King, unlike Athénaïs, Madame de Soubise had no children unacknowledged by her husband—and he was the only man she cared for. The King's riches attracted her, for her husband's sake; but for Louis himself, as a man, apart from his divinity as the god whom all must obey, this beautiful blonde had no love. Nevertheless, it offers a strange picture of the times, when we learn that this lady caused the story of her amours with Louis to be painted upon the ceilings of the Hôtel Soubise, in allegorical form. The allegory chosen was that of Cupid and Psyche.

It was when the King was forty-one that he became enamoured of "la Fontanges." Madame de Montespan had brought the girl to his notice and extolled her every charm to him, until his curiosity was aroused. She was a little maid from Limousin, and lady-of-honour to the German princess who had become the second wife of Monsieur. She was related to the Marquis de la Feuillade, through whose influence she had obtained the post.

Pretty and simple, with a bright, fresh colour, her hair—reddish gold in hue—was glorious and abundant, her face was that of a petulant, pouting child. When Montespan praised up this child to the King—as a mute idol, a marble statue perfectly formed—she imagined that the young girl had not an idea in her head nor a will of her own. It was at a hunting party in 1679 that, for whatever design, Athénaïs brought up the young beauty to the King, dwelling

with apparent rapture upon all the virginal charms of the young maid-of-honour. One by one, before the blushing maid, the shameless Marquise detailed the inventory of her youthful charms. She was "so new, so exactly and perfectly beautiful, so well proportioned in every limb and feature, so faultless from head to foot. Hands, eyes, feet—all were perfect!"

The great god Jupiter-Louis listened and looked; nay, more, he approved of the descripion given; he approved, moreover, of the little gem described.

Now comes the transformation! No sooner was this little angel annexed to the Royal seraglio than she immediately developed a will of her own. No longer was she a mute idol, a *petite sotte*, incapable of uttering two consecutive words. Far from it! Fontanges became at once insolent, showed a violent temper, cynical to a degree, and, above all, displayed a very firm intention to make everybody march according to her lightest caprices.

Madame de Maintenon was pious; Madame de Maintenon, however, following out the lines she had imposed upon herself, did not propose to make such a *faux pas* as to reason with the King. She thought that a few words of good advice to one so much her junior as this child might not, however, be taken amiss. What was her surprise at the reply from the pretty, pouting lips of little Fontanges!—"*Est-ce qu'on quitte un roi comme on laisse tomber sa chemise?*"

The regenerate Madame de Maintenon raised her well-rounded arms in horror, but held her peace. Soon little Fontanges became a Duchesse, and the Queen accepted her—because she had to.

The young Duchesse was for ever on horseback with the King, and delighted Louis with her bizarre tricks and ways. One of these was to ride like a boy, dressed like a boy. When out hunting one day she threw away her hat covered with enormous feathers, and tied all her luxuriant masses of hair round her forehead with a riband. And

thus she remained. The whole Court followed suit; soon all the ladies wore their hair *à la* Fontanges.

While giving to the little maid a house and an allowance of a hundred thousand crowns a month, for her sake—to shine before her eyes—Louis burst out into wild extravagance. He commenced building in all directions, palaces and fortresses were erected everywhere. For his own bed he had sheets of cloth-of-gold, he wore the most magnificent costumes. Sums equivalent to twelve hundred millions of *livres* of to-day were expended in a short time, in one extravagance after another, during the short reign of Mademoiselle de Fontanges.

Then, when the young Duchesse suddenly became ill, he turned to Madame de Maintenon. And the ex-widow Scarron also made a turn—she turned her back upon her protectress, Madame de Richelieu, the pious head of the Cabal to whom she owed everything. It was in vain that the head and fount of Illuminism, the Duchesse from whose palace Desmarets had issued his mystical nonsense, sought, in spite, now to form a combination with Maria Theresa of Austria, the first wife of the Dauphin, against de Maintenon. The latter carried the day, and did them both so many ill turns that they soon died in disgust. Illuminism was dead too, so far as Madame de Maintenon was concerned. She remained pious, but in a different way. She kept the King at home—no more wild freaks now! no riding about with girls who threw their hats away in fits of childish laughter, or who dressed like little pages.

The Court became silent and solemn, while the King devoted himself, instead of to young women, to eating and drinking. 'Also he devoted himself to setting up his own authority against that of the Pope, to becoming the real head of the Church and appointer of the Bishops to their sees. Further, to the worrying of the Protestants—the first dragonnades commenced with Madame de Maintenon's nightly instructions!

Meanwhile, the poor little Fontanges died—upon June 15th, 1681. She begged very hard for the King

to come and see her to say good-bye. He consented with great reluctance, because he never could bear sick people.

The last kiss of this perishing mortal, whom he had so recently seen dashing about in the forests like a nymph of Diana, tearing along at full gallop with her hair flying behind her, had a terrible effect upon the King. He determined upon instant expiation.

Louis returned from the bedside of the dying girl to Madame de Maintenon, and soon the expiation took shape, in the further torture of the Protestants. The dragoons were sent to the houses of those of the reformed religion, to tear their children away from them by force, and an order was issued that same day throughout the kingdom to the effect that children of seven years of age and upwards were permitted to leave their parents and convert themselves! Such was the influence of Scarron's widow upon the King, whom she had now converted with a vengeance. When Colbert begged the King to hold his hand—and he was successful for a time in stopping the dragonnades—Madame de Maintenon, with increased piety, bade him to stretch forth that now saintly hand once more. Louis did as he was told, with the result that Louvois published an order of the King's, saying that "it was a mistake to believe that the King forbade the ill-treatment of the Protestants." No wonder that bigoted Catholicism throughout the whole kingdom was aroused to the highest pitch of enthusiasm when this barbarous edict was spread far and wide, which was upon July 4th, 1681.

In all these actions Madame de Maintenon and the King were strongly supported by the Jesuits. Moreover, the Jesuits upheld Louis against the Pope himself; the only supporters left to the Holy Father in France being those who belonged to the heretical schism called Jansenism.

Thus Louis was his own Pope, and Gallicanism, which had been tried with such ill-success in past days by Richelieu,

now ruled supreme in the land of France. Louis XIV. was, for the time being at all events, not only King of Kings but also Bishop of Bishops. And Madame de Maintenon remained as his Egeria, and continued to instruct him in her sacred grove.

CHAPTER XXVI

Madame de Guyon and Marie Alacoque

1675—1678

The Jesuits, the King's confessor, Père la Chaise, and Madame de Maintenon all agreed upon one point. This was that the nature of Louis was too coarse, too material, to be affected by the mystic dreams of the Quietist sect. Therefore, although hitherto upon the best of terms with the Duchesse de Richelieu—whose maiden name was Anne Poussart—and with her Intendant, Desmarets, they turned their backs upon their Illuminist doctrines when attempting the conversion of the King.

The book, published in 1670, upon passive inertia, by the blind Malaval, and the *Guide* of Molinos which—appearing in 1674 with the approval of Rome—created such a vast sensation, were accordingly both rejected as being too poetical to be brought to the notice of their Royal master. The refined sensualism of Molinos soared, it was felt, upon a higher plane than suited the all too earthy soul of the King. Nor did Père la Chaise bring before his Majesty the seductive and eloquent Madame de Guyon, a widow of the age of twenty in 1670, who, for the following ten years, preached in Paris the doctrines of mystic death—of annihilation in love. Nevertheless, years later, in 1689, we find Madame de Maintenon, who experienced no vocation for Quietism other than that produced by excessive ennui, turning to this Madame de Guyon and the party of devout Duchesses who then surrounded her.

The object of these Duchesses—de Charost, de Chevreuse, wife of the pious grandson of de Luynes, and others—was to work upon Madame de Maintenon; and Fénelon, whom Madame de Guyon had won over, was with them. Madame de Guyon taught that the apathetic and passive contemplation of the Deity constituted religious perfection upon earth.

It was the personal charm of this lady, the pleasure and amusement ever to be derived from her society, which induced Madame de Maintenon to throw off all state and frequently to visit, incognito, these good and caressing persons, in whose company she found an all-pervading gentleness. They flattered her, surrounded her with tender care, and succeeded in deceiving her as to her own feelings. Thus, she imagined herself softened—believed that the aridity of her soul would cease.

All who ever came into contact with Madame de Guyon experienced her wonderful charm of tenderness, her involuntary power of causing hearts to fly to hers and to cling to her like the ivy. When Madame de Maintenon introduced her to the sort of conventual school for young noble ladies which she established at Saint-Cyr, Madame de Guyon had a triumph. The young hearts bloomed like the rose in her presence, all were placed unrestrainedly at her feet. But all this was hidden from the King, who loved nothing less than Quietism, who indeed treated both those of that cult and the austere Jansenists with undue severity. In the year 1697 a Quietist *curé* of Burgundy was condemned to the flames by the Parliament of Dijon, while some nuns of that sect were shamefully imprisoned in the Saltpêtriere—a horrible sewer for the correction of fallen women. Madame de Guyon herself was—in company with her spiritual director, Père Lacombe—imprisoned for several years by the Archbishop Harlay de Champvalon, a prelate of worthless reputation. However mistaken she may have been in her ideas, ideas poetically expressed in *Les Torrents*, a powerful romance of passionate emotion, that the character of Madame de Guyon was saintly none can deny.

None, indeed, recognised this better than Père Lacombe,

whom she directed while calling him her director. When she was by his side, the father too was a saint. Deprived of her, he became nothing. The long imprisonment which she suffered so nobly proved fatal to Père Lacombe ; he died gradually of melancholy. The poor man ended in writing that which was probably the true secret of his life, that he was lost, broken, in despair for love of her. Madame de Guyon smiled and said he had lost his senses. The father probably had, but he died in that condition to which others besides him were reduced by love for that lady.

The strange thing about this frail and beautiful woman—one who had been caused to suffer like a martyr by others, without complaint, from earliest youth—was that she never seemed to realise the force of her empire over others ; or else, her whole love being reserved for the Saviour of mankind, she had no real love left to give to those, women as often as men, who gave her their tenderest, most ardent feelings without restraint. But she loved all alike.

By some, owing to this magnetic attraction which she exercised, she was considered to be a witch. Two young women of Grenoble fell passionately in love with her. The first detested her, in her absence, almost to the verge of folly, but loved her with equal frenzy when present. The other, a very well-to-do young lady, rejecting her suitors, vowed celibacy for the sake of Madame de Guyon, and insisted upon following her upon her journeys, dangerous in those days, through Switzerland and Italy.

This was a young woman possessing great charms of face and person. Thus she became a source of embarrassment upon the journey into Italy, where they were both captured by brigands, whose stony hearts, however, Madame de Guyon melted with her heavenly smiles. The unfortunate girl became ill from the excess of her devotion to her protectress. Soul and body alike suffered. When her relations were informed, they suspected that Madame de Guyon had bewitched her to obtain her money. When her brother arrived to rescue her, the girl recovered, but passionately refused to leave. When her protectress

insisted also upon her going with her brother, all the girl's love changed to the most violent and unmeasured hate. She left, vowing vengeance, in fury and tears; but, after doing all the injury she could to her benefactress, repented bitterly—and lost her senses from remorse.

While preaching everywhere the liberty of divine love, Madame de Guyon established hospitals, tended the poor. Although pure-minded to a degree, her eyes were too clear —and this was her greatest crime—not to see the evils existing in the lives of the clergy and the internal shame of the cloister. Without criticism or blame, she encouraged the misled nuns to strike for freedom, to allow themselves no longer to be made the plaything of vice, to break through the unchaste tyranny of the *directeur* in the convents.

This it was which caused her to be hunted from one place to another; the Church could brook no such undue interference with its ancient privileges. Nevertheless, so great was her personal attraction, that even her enemies and persecutors, than whom none was greater than her mother-in-law, yielded in the end and loved her. From the following incident it would seem almost as if a divine light shone through the countenance of this most extraordinary woman.

Going to consult a holy anchorite, an old Franciscan, who for years had seen no woman's face, the old hermit addressed to her the following words: "You search without that which you possess within. Search God within yourself, for you will find Him there." Then he turned his back and was silent. Going a second time to see the holy man, he said to Madame de Guyon that a Voice from on high had said to him, "This is My bride!" In pious humility, she exclaimed innocently, "I! so unworthy, your bride! Forgive me, Lord, but You were not thinking of me."

With reference to the effect upon her heart of the anchorite's words, she wrote: "It was an arrow-stroke. I experienced a wound of delicious love—with the vow never to allow it to heal."

The eloquence of Madame de Guyon was as great, as convincing, as was the pen rich and varied with which, in *Les Torrents*, she described the terrible trial of love, the picture of physical death, with allegorical illustrations taken from the wild torrents, rivers, and mountain crests of the solitudes wherein she composed the entrancing work, which was dangerous in its very seduction.

Such, then, was the prophetess of Quietism, the emblem of spirituality, she from whose romantic doctrines the Jesuits and the King turned, with avidity, to the more carnal and dangerous doctrines of the Bleeding Heart.

Of these, another woman was the exponent, one of a different class entirely, the Sister Marie Alacoque. Both of these women, who so greatly affected the Catholic world in the latter half of the seventeenth century, were born in 1650, therefore both were twenty-five in 1675, when we first hear of Marie Alacoque. She may be regarded as the prophetess of spiritual carnality or materialism, in antithesis to the spiritual romance preached by Madame de Guyon.

As it was the Jesuits who made possible the cult of Marie Alacoque, which—under the name of the *Sacré Cœur*—became in their hands and the King's the war emblem against Protestantism, we will now proceed to consider how it sprang into existence.

Père la Chaise and his brotherhood had long realised that all that Louis regarded in, or understood of, religion was the outward practice of its rites. Spirituality, devotion, he did not understand; positive acts and deeds alone had any influence upon his mind.

They came to the conclusion, therefore, that the better to impress upon this irreligious King the necessity of drastic reformation—not so much of himself, but of the Protestants—a miracle would be necessary. Since, for fear of ridicule, if found out, they did not like to manufacture a miracle, they took one where they found it, all ready made.

The miracle had taken place already, among the Visitandine nuns of Burgundy, a country where both the wine and the blood is rich. The Visitandines called them-

selves " Daughters of the Heart of Jesus." In Normandy, where the adoration of the Sacred Heart had commenced, this adoration had been of the heart of Mary, while awaiting the expected visit of Jesus. Godwin, an Englishman, and Eudes, the Oratorian, first added the cult of the heart of Jesus to that of Mary.

It was, however, a Burgundian nun of Paray who received the blessed visitation. She announced that " Jesus had visited her, had mixed His heart with hers, had allowed her to kiss the wounds of His bleeding heart."

Marie Alacoque, the nun in question, was a girl of a very sanguine temperament, one whose nature had not been reduced by early immurement within the walls of a convent, as she only became cloistered late, when in the full force of life and youth. Frequently, owing to her superabundance of the life-giving fluid, it was found necessary to subject her to prolonged bleeding, in spite of which she had strength enough left to experience, without succumbing, this extreme ecstasy of celestial felicity.

Panting with fervour, Marie Alacoque hastened to her Abbess and informed her of the glad tidings—that she had become the Bride of Jesus. The Abbess was not a woman to let slip such an opportunity. She had a contract of marriage between Jesus and Marie Alacoque duly drawn up, and, while Marie signed it with her own blood, the Abbess, without flinching, boldly signed in the name of Jesus. The marriage was duly recognised and acknowledged as valid by the Jesuit fathers, who maintained that there was no religious mysticism in it, but that it was an actual carnal and material fact. They boldly stated and repeated, of the cult, thenceforward, that " *it is the cult of the real bleeding heart, of the flesh, of the blood of Jesus.*"

Marie Alacoque likewise explained that there was no need for any high mysticism, that all that was necessary was " not to hate God." " Then," said Marie, " Jesus will come—in person,—to mix His heart with yours ! "

Thus, with this wonderful miracle, was instituted that equivocal relationship with the material heart which led

to the establishment in a few years of four hundred and twenty-eight convents of the *Sacré Cœur*.

From the year following the miracle the Protestant religion was forbidden at Paray. Soon, it was forbidden everywhere in France, and attacked by Charles II. in England. The second marriage of the Duke of York with the Catholic Mary of Modena having been arranged by Louis, the hopes of the English Catholics rose high. Before long Coleman, the secretary of the Duchess, wrote to Père la Chaise, asking him for help, saying that with a little assistance "they would deal such a blow at heresy as it had never received since the days of Calvin." The man selected to carry the required succour to the Duke of York's household was a young professor of rhetoric of the Jesuit college of Lyons. He was a fair preacher, but inclined to be consumptive; his name was la Colombière. Before sending him over, it was essayed to make a fanatic, a volcano, of la Colombière, to do which the rather sickly young man was sent for awhile to consort with the author of the miracle, to seek union with the volcanic Marie Alacoque at Paray.

These measures were eminently successful; the burning, full-blooded Marie was soon able to announce another miracle, which was that she saw distinctly the heart of la Colombière joined with her own in the heart of Jesus! Thus, primed with all the energy which the Sacred Heart could give, this young Jesuit invaded England, where, for three years, he remained concealed in the palace of the Duke of York, endeavouring to convert the sturdy English nobles who were brought to him for that purpose. How the purpose prospered, until the pretended revelations of Titus Oates and the actual discovery of the plottings of Coleman revealed the intrigues going on under the roof of the heir to the crown, are matters of English history.

The direct result of the mission of this emissary of the *Sacré Cœur* became apparent to Louis XIV. and his Jesuit advisers, before very long, in a manner which they had by no means anticipated. For alas! so far as England was

concerned, they were reluctantly forced to confess that the miracle tree had not borne the expected fruit.

On the contrary—as a sequence to the immense popular outbreak against Catholicism—James, Duke of York, was declared to be unfitted for the succession to the Crown, while Arlington, a Papist in disguise, found himself forced to give unpalatable counsels to Charles and James. These were to allay the popular excitement, by giving Mary, the daughter of the Duke of York, in marriage to the young William, Prince of Orange—thus making of Orange his father-in-law's rival to the British Crown.

In France, however, the grace of the miracle acted so strongly upon the heart of the now reformed King, that a few years later there was not a living professed Protestant remaining within the whole of his fair domains.

CHAPTER XXVII

The Poisonings and Madame de Brinvilliers

1676—1680

It was in the year 1674 that Molinos published, at Rome, a book which had at once twenty editions. It spread into Spain, France, and Italy, and was translated into every tongue. Molinos was the apostle of the death of the soul—he taught that sin should be conquered by sin; in fact, the tenets of Molinos were simply those of Illuminism, only that he carried still farther than Desmarets de Saint-Sorlin the doctrines of moral paralysis.

The books, which a few years earlier the Intendant Desmarets had issued from the Hôtel Richelieu, maintained that the grand mystical principle consisted in the annihilation of the body and the death of the will.

Before either of these two there flourished at Louviers a certain Father David, director of the nuns in the convent founded there by the widow of the Procureur Hennequin—who had been hanged for swindling. He also taught the death of sin by sin—the better to enter into a state of primeval innocence! Father David was an "Adamite," and his strange ideas as to what constituted purity were carried out by the nuns under his direction to extraordinary lengths. Since Adam had been naked when in a state of innocence, the better to subdue the novices, the nuns forced them to appear in the garden and chapel of the convent in the condition of our mother Eve! The unfortunate sister

Madeleine, a novice of the age of sixteen, was punished because—although she had already been the victim of a Franciscan monk—she still retained a sufficient sense of decency to endeavour to cover herself with the altar cloth, at the time of the administration of the Communion.

The subsequent sufferings of Madeleine Bavent when, upon the death of Father David, he was succeeded by the much younger Father Picart, were made known in the time of the Fronde. The terrible scandals in connection with the convent of Louviers, the mock sorcery and open immorality practised there, had already been pointed out, to Anne of Austria, by a brave young surgeon of Paris, Yvelin. She—good easy woman—had supported the priests, including the Pénitencier d'Évreux and the Vicaire (or curate) of Père Picart, whose name was Boullé, when they maintained that the nuns were actually possessed of devils and that all that went on was the result of witchcraft. Whatever it was—it continued. Picart was then dead, but a "possessed" nun brought horrible accusations against Madeleine, such as that she had seen Satan himself lying, in an "Adamite" condition, by her side.

How she was stripped and stuck all over with needles by the other nuns, and made to accuse others of witchcraft so that they were burned alive, how too she was kept in that condition in an underground sewer, are but a few of the revelations which were made, concerning this unfortunate girl, by a courageous Oratorian priest.

It was only a repetition of two similar affairs that had previously been brought to light; that which resulted in the burning of the priest Urbain Grandier at Loudun in 1634, and the terrible scandal which brought Gauffridi, another priest, to a similar fate in Provence. Both had been culpable, and were accused by the hysterical nuns of witchcraft; Gauffridi especially being stigmatised as the "Prince of the Magicians," while the whole of France talked of nothing but the devils of Loudun.

The teachings of Father David, the Adamite, were the doctrines accepted as the Louviers convent Illuminism:

"The body cannot stain the soul. One must, by the sin which renders humble and cures pride, kill sin!"

The poor girl of sixteen could not accept these doctrines without a struggle. However, Picart won her over, and all the nuns in the convent soon became equally, indeed more depraved than herself—but Madeleine was tortured on account of her contumacy and complaints.

It was one of the first deeds of independence of the Fronde to ordain "the destruction of the Sodom of Louviers and dispersal of the girls to their homes." The Fronde—which was in effect a revolution of honesty against rascality—also ordained the burning alive of Boullé and the burning of the dead bones of Picart.

Such is a very short epitome of an affair which discloses some of the evils of Illuminism in the convents, and we only record it as a prelude to a recital of the poisonings in the outer world, where the fatal tenets brought forth no less fatal, if less immodest, results.

In the celebrated affair of the Marquise de Brinvilliers, we begin by finding three people living together, of whom two at least were penetrated with the doctrines which taught that crime is the ladder by which heaven is to be reached; although it was not until later that the followers of Molinos went so far as to recognise in murder a divine action. Then we find the sanctimonious Marie d'Aguada actually killing her children, in order to render herself holy by converting them into angels. The three people, who lived together in the greatest intimacy, were the Marquis and Marquise de Brinvilliers, and the Chevalier de Sainte-Croix, an ex-captain of cavalry.

The Marquis was what may be described as a pleasure seeker, who, although attached to his wife, sought that pleasure too often elsewhere. The Marquise—daughter of Monsieur d'Auvray, a magistrate—was a pretty little woman, with very fine blue eyes, while the cavalry captain was now a writer of ascetical books and a searcher for the philosopher's stone.

It was in vain that the lady represented to her husband

that people might talk of the exceeding liberty and loneliness to which he relegated his wife and the Chevalier. His reply was, "Let them talk! I like him to be here to console you in my absences."

With such a reply, what could the Marquise do but to resign herself? And so she and the philosophical captain pursued their studies together. Desmarets, the blind Malaval, they knew well already, before Molinos, publishing his great work in 1674, had given the world occasion for further religious study in the same direction. The very pious Chevalier de Sainte-Croix—whose real name was Godin, he being a bastard of a noble house—had a friend, the financier de Penautier, whose real name was Reich.

Reich, or as he preferred to be called, the Seigneur de Penautier, was a rich man and held the post of "Trésorier de la bourse des États de Languedoc." With this appointment he was not content. His friend, the financier Hanyvel, or to give him also his alias, the Seigneur de Saint-Laurent, was a much richer man than he, since he was "Receveur-Général du Clergé de France," a position which brought him in, annually, a sum equal to two hundred thousand *livres* of to-day.

It was in vain that Penautier obtained the support of the Bishops of Languedoc, the majority of the Bishops were in the north, and they refused to associate him with Saint-Laurent.

Accordingly, Penautier consoled himself with religion, and the friendship of the searcher for the philosophical stone. His religion stood him in good stead. The people of the Halles, the markets near at hand, were in the habit of borrowing small loans from him, through his clerks. Imagining that the house of the money-lender was full of gold, they gave information that he carried on illegal coining in it. Perhaps the poor people imagined that the Chevalier de Sainte-Croix had already taught his friend the transmutation of metals. A descent of the police, however, upon the pious man's house, only resulted in the finding of a skull—an object of devout contemplation.

While the Marquis de Brinvilliers took no exception to the very friendly terms between his wife and the Chevalier —in fact, encouraged them—there were others who did not stand by and look on quite so complacently.

It was not a difficult matter to get a *lettre de cachet* in those days! Monsieur d'Auvray, the father of the Marquise, did obtain a *lettre de cachet*, with the result that, one fine morning, both the Marquis and his wife were looking for their friend in vain. For the Chevalier de Sainte-Croix had been spirited off to the Bastille.

Truly those were charming times; the Bastille was always so nice and handy for any friend for whom one was anxious to obtain a new lodging! The Bastille soon proved to be a very advantageous lodging, at all events, for the Chevalier, since it is evident that he found the philosopher's stone within its walls. He went in poor; he came out rich—very rich!

A friend whose society he found agreeable helped greatly to pass the time within the historic building, for he was also addicted to philosophical research. His name was Exili, and he was the Italian poisoner who had been the righthand man of the Signora Olympia, the lady who ruled over the Pope Innocent X. No less than one hundred and fifty of Signora Olympia's friends had had the bad luck to die suddenly; and—strange to say—she inherited all their money.

When Sainte-Croix came forth from the Bastille, he had horses, carriages, servants, fine clothes—all that is useful and ornamental in life except a wife. Whether by the advice of the Marquise de Brinvilliers or no, we know not, but the wife, one young and pretty, was procured also in due course. Strange to say, while taking a wife, he gave up to Madame de Brinvilliers one of his old servants, Lachaussée by name. And also, strange to say, shortly afterwards the father and brothers of the Marquise were all removed by a merciful Providence to a better world!

Another old servant the Chevalier de Sainte-Croix had, whom he dispensed with at the same time—good-naturedly

allowing his faithful lackey Georges to take service with the Chevalier de Saint-Laurent.

Not long after the arrival of Georges in the establishment of that great financier, the post of "Receveur-Général du Clergé de France" was vacant, and another occupant was required for the post of the man who had died so unexpectedly. He was ready—in the shape of the Seigneur de Penautier.

Oddly enough, death had also been busy in the immediate *entourage* of this pious man, the disappearance of two persons in succession from this planet of ours having already made him enormously wealthy.

Now, for a time, everybody was happy and every one of our little *coterie* had what they desired, with no inconvenient persons about who stood in the way, made disagreeable remarks, or indulged in the playful habit of getting *lettres de cachet* for the Bastille. The dark-winged messenger was, however, still hovering overhead, for, some years after the death of Saint-Laurent, the Chevalier felt himself at the point of death. Penautier had time to send for some papers of his which the sick man had in his possession; the latter also had time to set his affairs in order and to duly receive spiritual comfort, before he expired—in the odour of sanctity.

Although the Chevalier's widow was prompt in having seals set, in the presence of the Commissaire Picard, upon all her deceased husband's effects, she was not prompt enough to elude the vigilance of the sister-in-law and enemy of the Marquise de Brinvilliers. For the young and recently widowed Madame d'Auvray contrived to send a sharp police agent, named Cluet, to be present at the formality, and this lynx-eyed detective was not long in pouncing upon a little casket, upon which the deceased Chevalier had written the following words, "For the love of God, whom I adore, I pray that this box be delivered to the Marquise de Brinvilliers." Cluet opened the box, it contained a packet of love-letters from the Marquise, a deed of gift signed by that lady in favour of Sainte-Croix, and some little packets.

Upon the packets were written, "For M. de Penautier"; they contained poison—in powders!

The Commissaire Picard was so upset at the discovery, that the respectable name of Monsieur de Penautier should be upon such terrible packets, that, while allowing the *procès verbal* to be drawn up by Cluet, in such a manner as to implicate Madame de Brinvilliers, he himself burned a very alarming document. This was nothing less than a damning confession written in the handwriting of the Chevalier de Sainte-Croix.

Picard said afterwards that "as a good Christian, he considered it his duty to destroy such a thing." How good a Christian he was we know—he had been a prime mover in the burning of the unhappy religious maniac Morin, who had been hounded to death by Desmarets and his gang at the time when the King was ill, in March 1663.

In addition to burning the confession, Picard so managed that several sheets of the *procès verbal* were not afterwards forthcoming. Thus the Lieutenant of Police, before whom the matter came, would see nothing against Penautier; further, the dates had been altered upon the *procès verbal*—and ante-dated to two years previous to the death of Saint-Laurent—when the paper eventually came before the Parliament of Paris. For, protected by the Church on one side, Penautier had also married his sister to the son of a *conseiller* of the Parliament; he was protected, therefore, by the magistracy also—and no doubt he made a good use of his money.

Against Madame de Brinvilliers, there was nothing but the love-letters. The servant Georges had disappeared since the death of Saint-Laurent, but when Lachaussée was arrested, he only implicated Sainte-Croix, in the matter of the poisoning of the brothers d'Auvray. His evidence about the Marquise was shifty—sometimes he said she was guilty, sometimes not. He was not allowed to say a word when he attempted to implicate Penautier. This latter gave the Marquise two letters of exchange, which enabled her to

escape to Liége in the Low Countries, but she would have been wiser to remain and have faced the charge, as she would have found it all arranged had she done so.

In her absence, however, her sister-in-law acted against her, and a plot was devised to entrap her in the convent to which she had retired, by taking advantage of her romantic disposition. It was felt that, by a proper use of the romantic love jargon of the Quietists, the still mundane heart of the Marquise might be ensnared. A police officer, named Desgrais—in disguise as an *abbé*—a man of agreeable manners and a clever talker, proceeded to Liége, where he soon obtained access to the lady, whose devotion was greatly admired by the nuns of the convent.

Desgrais wheedling her with the correct mystical love phrases, she willingly walked outside the walls with the charming *abbé*. Off came the disguise! and the revealed spy, placing Madame de Brinvilliers in a carriage surrounded by archers, started off for Paris.

Further, a confession in which she accused herself of all kinds of ridiculous childish iniquities, as well as such grave ones as the murder of her father, was found upon her. The examination of one of the archers, Barbier by name, did much to implicate Penautier. This man the Marquise imagined that she had won over. Not only did she give Barbier two letters for the financier, but she made use of the following words—when asked if he knew about the poisonings: "As much as myself; moreover, he must have much more to fear. For that matter, if I were only to speak, there are half of the people in Paris whom I could lose (*perdre*), but I shall say nothing."

There was no doubt about others, and great people too, being implicated. A gentleman came to meet her, and did his best to buy off the archers, but without avail. The terror of her judges, for fear she should speak and implicate these others, was ludicrous, while every care was taken to avoid making her do so. Moreover, every one who surrounded the Marquise seemed to be affected by her gentle charm. The torture was applied to her for show, to satisfy

the people, but " the question " was so lightly put that, not only did she say nothing, but asked for food when it was over. Nevertheless, she willingly confessed to Monsieur Pirot, a professor of the Sorbonne, that she had poisoned her father and brothers. She showed great shame upon her husband's account, but no repentance, simply saying that " her predestination had entailed her arrest."

During the question, many people of the highest rank, all in the greatest state of uneasiness, came to hear what she would divulge. When it appeared that she would say nothing to incriminate others, Olympia Mancini, Comtesse de Soissons—who had been warned by her messengers that she was safe—came with many others from Versailles to see the unhappy Marquise mount in the tumbril which was to take her to her execution. This was made as light as possible. As a parricide—her hand should have been cut off, while—as a poisoner—according to law, she ought to have been burned at the stake. She was spared both these penalties, only being beheaded and her body burned.

Upon mounting the scaffold, the last words of the Marquise de Brinvilliers were: " What! no pity? And yet there are so many guilty, why should I be alone to die? " Many there were who breathed more freely when she was dead. Penautier got off scot free, although the widow of Hanyvel pursued him. For he accused her of having herself accepted, supported him—for the sake of money—when he had asked the Bishops for her husband's appointment. Her answer was simple: " I was poor! "

The people were by no means satisfied, and forced the hands of the Parliament. And well they might, for there were plenty more poisoners about.

There were houses of assignation, the mistresses of which were guilty of any sort of crimes, of which infanticide was one. From the murder of children to that of grown-up people was but a step. Husbands, lovers, rivals at Court or in love, were being got rid of everywhere, by such women as la Voisin, Vigoureux, and Fillastre, to whom there were associated priests, who assisted them in their sorceries.

These people had carriages, horses, fine houses, and servants in livery—so well did their infamous trade flourish!

To find out the future or obtain the death of any one, it was necessary to have a "black mass" performed by these priests—upon an altar consisting of a naked woman. The mass was said backwards, and addressed to the devil. The priest for the horrible Voisin was named Lesage, while Guibourg was another, who performed the black mass habitually at Saint-Denis, in a hovel.

La Fillastre held a letter in which four Princesses and Duchesses desired to know if the King would die soon. It was chiefly by blackmail that these people made such fortunes, as they made the inquirers write their demands—pretending to burn them at the time, but keeping them as a means of extorting money later.

It was not long before it became known to the Parliament that the Comtesse de Soissons and her husband's brother, the Comte de Clermont, had together poisoned their husband and brother. The King's name also became involved through them and other noble ladies, who had had recourse to sorcery to injure la Vallière.

Louis himself it was who warned Olympia and Clermont and, while allowing them to escape, stopped the open proceedings of the Parliament, substituting for them a secret council. At this, whenever a compromising question was asked, la Reynie, the Lieutenant of Police, closured it sharply—"by his secret orders," he said.

Thus, only the Voisins and women of that class were burned alive—and as sorceresses only. Both of the priests, although nominally executed, escaped, as did all the grand nobles whose names were implicated. Among these were the Duchesse de Bouillon—who was one of Mazarin's nieces, sister to Olympia—and the Duc de Luxembourg, the General who had behaved so cruelly in Holland. The Duchesse de Bouillon brazened the matter out for a time and then left France, but Luxembourg did not even take the trouble to deny the charge or alter his usual habits. He knew that since the death of Turenne he had become too useful to be

disturbed about a little matter like poisoning a few men and women, so he calmly remained as unconcerned as ever. His behaviour and the escape of the priests was a sign of the times under Louis XIV. The King never allowed the priests to be punished by the civil law, but handed them over to the tribunals of the Church, which, more frequently than not, merely punished the offenders by removing them to some out-of-the-way country parish or convent until the matter had blown over. In excessive cases, when the Church itself found a man dangerous, he was imprisoned in some horrible *in pace* at the bottom of a dungeon, where no disclosures that he could make would ever be overheard.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Preludes to the Revocation

1683—1685

Although it may possibly be open to doubt whether the relations between the King and Madame de Maintenon were, before the time of Fontanges, what they were later, all decency was thrown to the winds in 1683. In that year the Queen died, upon July 30th. She died owing to the excessive heat, aided by the inconsideration of the King. Marie Thérèse was a stout, short woman, round and chubby. Louis dragged her about with him that hot summer more than her constitution could stand, and it was after one of these journeys that she died.

Ever since the year of the jubilee, 1676, Madame de Maintenon had been labouring for the conversion of the King. In 1681, about the time of the death of Mademoiselle de Fontanges, he had, we know—at the request of Maintenon—resumed marital relations with the Queen; although, at the same time, he regularly passed the evenings, from six to ten, alone with the governess of Montespan's children.

When the Queen died, upon July 30th, Madame de Maintenon was leaving the death-chamber, when she was accosted by M. de la Rochefoucauld, who took her by the arm.

"The King has need of you, madame!"

Such was the message that she received. Despite

From the picture by Van Loo.

MARIE THÉRÈSE,
Queen of France and Navarre.

the remonstrances of the young wife of the Dauphin,* who wished to accompany them, Louis instantly started off alone with Madame de Maintenon for Saint-Cloud. He took very effectual measures to prevent the Dauphine from accompanying them, by sending a couple of doctors to bleed her, upon the pretence of her delicate health, as she was expecting to give the Dauphin an heir. Thus, while she was tied to her bed, the pair made their escape.

After two days at Saint-Cloud, the King took Madame de Maintenon to Fontainebleau, twitting her upon the journey on account of the sorrow she thought becoming to display for the death of the Queen. When, dragging herself from her couch, the Dauphine arrived at Fontainebleau five days later, she found Madame de Maintenon already installed in the Queen's own apartments, in the Royal bed of the King's consort—that wife already forgotten!

The pious Madame de Maintenon had not been pleased with the somewhat too complacent part which Bishop Bossuet, now Monseigneur de Meaux, had enacted, in the year of the jubilee, towards her predecessor Madame de Montespan. Yet one would be inclined to fancy that she must have blushed with shame to think of what that great man Bossuet now would have to say about herself.

For great Bossuet was—great by his oratorical powers and great by his pen. Moreover, he was pious and no hypocrite, even if his views were not our views and he found himself, in religious matters, compelled to go with the times, to obey the King, his master—to write that kings had received from God the right to persecute heretics with the sword.

In 1681, the year that Louis defied the Pope and set himself up as Bishop of Bishops, we find Bossuet, as his mouthpiece, opening the assembly of the clergy with a strongly Gallican and very eloquent discourse. This had the effect of bringing the Bishops assembled over to the

* The second wife of the Dauphin was Maria Anne of Bavaria. His three sons—Louis, Duc de Bourgogne, Philippe, Duc d'Anjou, and Charles, Duc de Berry, were by this wife.

King's views; moreover, of causing them to agree to his Majesty personally annexing the revenues of all vacant sees.

Nevertheless, not ten years later, when the King had changed his policy towards the Pope, this faithful Bossuet, who had had charge of the Dauphin's education, found himself deserted by both King and Bishops alike. Later still, Fénelon, who had in a sense been brought forward under Bossuet's auspices, was preferred before him. Fénelon, author of *Télémaque*, who was the preceptor of the King's grandchild the Duc de Bourgogne, was made Archbishop of Cambrai, which gave him a princely state in the Empire; Bossuet was left a simple Bishop. It is true that the principality of Fénelon was but an exile from Paris in disguise. The probable reason of this neglect was jealousy on the part of Louis; he could not bear any one to be great except himself. Therefore, it is not unlikely that he listened complacently to a scandal with which the Jesuits attacked the great Bossuet.

This was the scandal concerning Mademoiselle Gary—a young lady whom he took to live with him, after having interested himself in her from the age of ten. From a property which she inherited called Mauléon, the girl was usually called Mademoiselle de Mauléon. From her earliest years the child had shown herself a wonderful classic; it was said of her that "she loved and protected" Latin verse. As she grew older, the young lady started a lawsuit, which went on—from court to court—for thirty years, ruining herself and almost ruining Bossuet too. For the worthy Bishop frequently supplied her with large sums, or paid up enormous obligations for which he had become her surety. The cause of her lawsuit was but a trivial one. Mademoiselle de Mauléon had been left a fish-stall in the Halles. She believed that she had the right to force all the hawkers to come and sell their fish at this stall—while they denied the right. In the year 1682 she was twenty-seven, while Bossuet was fifty-five. Notwithstanding that all their relations had been always open and innocent—and in spite

of the great disparity of years—the Jesuits attacked the Bishop. With sly laughter, they made comparisons between the two great struggles upon which he was engaged—that of the Gallican Church against the Pope and that of the fish-stall against the hawkers. They gave vent to a very witty *jeu-de-mot* against the worthy Bossuet, which, repeated everywhere, made him ridiculous. This was, *Monseigneur de Meaux n'est ni Janséniste, ni Moliniste—il est Mauléoniste.*

In addition to the loss of the Queen, Louis had to undergo another loss in the same year. For Colbert died: him also had the King killed, but by ingratitude.

Louvois was already the master, supporting the policy of the King in the matter of the persecution of Protestants, which caused the ruin of industry in France. Colbert had lost all hope: he saw the public ruin staring him everywhere in the face; and—upon the top of all this—he had to face the King's unjust reproaches.

The matter for which the King reproached Colbert was the expenses in the construction and reconstruction of Versailles, a mad expenditure against which, from the first, Colbert had fought tooth and nail. Most unfairly, the King compared him to Louvois. Why, Louis asked, if Louvois could build fortifications and fortresses by the use of soldiers and forced labour, could not he do the same? It was useless for the faithful Minister to represent to his master that what could be done by soldiers and peasants in the one case could only be effected by skilled labour in the other. Louis persisted in seeing no difference in the construction of the most beautiful works of art and the elevation of the parapet of a bastion. In conclusion, he attacked Colbert viciously about the price of the iron railing at Versailles.

The ingratitude was too much for the man who had given his all, who had done the work of a thousand men, to please his ambitious and extravagant master. He went home, took to his bed, and died.

Moreover, he died detested by every one—everywhere

were blazing the bonfires for the death of "the tyrant." Tyrant, it is true, Colbert had been, but it was his situation which had made him so. When he began his reforms, he started upon a ruined France, ruined before him by Mazarin and Fouquet. He had to continue upon this impoverished soil—one with an untaxed and an unproductive nobility, who lived ever more and more upon the State—and he was compelled to raise ever-increasing sums. The Court had to be maintained, the crowd of functionaries, whom his very reforms required, had to be paid, and, above all, the enormous standing armies had to be paid and supplied with all the munitions of war. And while the clergy, rich and idle, helped in no way, Colbert had continually to find more and more money for these purposes—and to build Versailles into the bargain.

It is no wonder if this man, although a great genius, was also a tyrant, a hard taskmaster. Little matter for surprise is it indeed if it has been said that Mazarin found France in misery, in rags, but the people still drank wine, whereas, under Colbert, there was nought for the people to drink save water.

In his expiring moments the Minister felt hanging over his head the curse of the millions whom, by his very activity, his very fidelity to his King, he had ruined. When a letter was brought to him from the King, he refused to open it. "No," said Colbert; "I will not read it. If I had done for my God what I have done for that man, I should be sure of salvation; now I know not whither I go!"

The Queen dead, Colbert dead, what was to come next? Madame de Maintenon for the King; but what for the courtiers? Who was to supply them with money? The answer was not long in coming. Were there not the goods of the Protestant churches, the charities instituted by those of the Reformed Faith? asked the Jesuits. Before long, the destruction of six hundred Protestant churches and the sequestration of all their attendant charities had brought in a fine sum. This the Jesuits, headed by Père la Chaise, thought it would be wise to allow to go to the King—that is

to say, to those whom the King delighted to honour. This was a sure means to make the persecution popular, for evidently the private means of individuals might be attacked and stolen in like manner. The question was, could the King be brought to see matters in that light? Could he be induced to order the general proscription and spoliation of the proscribed? It was to be hoped so, and his constantly increasing ill temper, caused by over-indulgence at the table and the consequent increase of ill health, seemed to render anything possible.

Nor was the absence of resistance, the extreme patience and submission on the part of the Protestants, likely to make Louis hold his hand. Did he not, upon a pitiable excuse, send Seignelay, the violent son of Colbert, with a fleet to bombard defenceless Genoa? In vain it had been that the old war-dog Duquesne, in command of the fleet, had urged the barbarity of the action; none the less were fourteen thousand bomb-shells thrown into the city of palaces. Was not Brussels also treated in a similar manner, for the sake of terrifying Spain and obtaining the cession of Luxembourg? Were not shells also, upon two separate occasions, rained upon the mosques of Algiers, filled with miserable women and children, who were torn to fragments? After the death of Colbert, it seemed as if the brutal counsels of Louvois were the only ones to suit the King. Furious, choleric himself—the furious War Minister was the only man to whom he would listen.

Nor did Madame de Maintenon, once she had assumed the position of mistress *en titre*, develop into the quiet, good-natured housewife calculated to brighten the domestic hearth with peaceful serenity. Far from it; under discreet modes of manifestation she became drily judicial and hard, cunningly violent. She was not the woman to lead the King into quiet, reasonable paths; her character was wanting altogether in that courageous firmness calculated to make her risk something for the sake of humanity—for the protection of that France in which she had been born a Protestant. From the servile prudence which she had

for long learned to exercise whilst in a position of humble dependence, she remained servilely prudent and a coward at the bottom. Although not one of the Jesuit party, she yet feared the Jesuits; she allowed herself to be led by them. Her own confessor was Godet, afterwards Bishop of Chartres; he was of Saint-Sulpice, a mediocre foundation, himself a man without violence, as without force of will. Through Godet she had no strong defence against the Jesuits. She therefore made terms with them—as they with her.

Thus became possible two things: for Madame de Maintenon, marriage with the King; for the Jesuits, the destruction, root and branch, of the Protestant religion throughout France.

While the King was hesitating, the pact was made—the result we know. About the end of 1685, upon an uncertain date, in the presence of four witnesses, the King took to wife Françoise d'Aubigné, widow of Scarron, Marquise de Maintenon. The marriage took place in great mystery, by night at Versailles, and it was performed by Hébert, the parish priest. He was made a Bishop for his pains. Two of the witnesses to this union between the already toothless King and a woman the incarnation of time-serving deceit were only valets of the Palace; the name of one of them was Bontemps. Despite the absence of state and the secrecy, Madame de Maintenon had gained her object—her position was indeed now secure.

Already, before the marriage took place, were the Jesuits commencing to gain theirs; the shrieks of the outraged women of Béarn, the immense lamentation, as the unbaptised children were torn to pieces outside Marennes, were already to be heard echoing over the affrighted land of France.

Owing to the destruction of the numerous Protestant places of worship, and the deportation of the pastors—so many as fifty at one time—to work with convicts chained to the seats of the galleys, the difficulties of baptism for the children of Protestants had become enormous.

In the depth of winter we find, therefore, these heroic people braving the terrors of land and sea alike to proceed to such places as Bordeaux and Rochelle, where their places of worship still existed. It was at the gate of the temple of Marennes that the terrible affair occurred referred to above; the word *temple*, we may mention, being used habitually to distinguish the Protestant church from the *église*, or Catholic house of prayer.

In the most biting, cruel, winter weather a great quantity of Protestants had assembled, carrying their unbaptised infants, many of whom, owing to the cold, were dead already. The weeping and wailing of ten thousand miserable souls rent the air when the army of converters descended upon them. In the struggle which ensued for the possession of the children, many of the inoffensive babes were torn limb from limb!

Then it was that the King hesitated—relented for awhile—and issued orders that the methods of conversion in Saintonge were to be softened.

A study of the *Correspondance Administrative*, Vol. IV., will show that the Protestants themselves were always only too anxious and willing to find attenuating circumstances for the King; they persist throughout in maintaining that he was deceived, that, independently of his bigotry and the expiation which he sought in this good work, he was the plaything of his surroundings. The relation of many terrible occurrences also by Élie Benoit, the Protestant chronicler, shows the same moderation throughout. In the times of the greatest persecution we see over and over again the persecuted ones assembling to pray for the King—that he may no longer listen to his evil counsellors, who, they said, played upon his credulity by representing that the Protestants were a great and united fanatical party, who carried off the children of Catholics—even as their own were carried off—for forcible conversion.

Ever thus they found excuses. When, among the other cruel series of *ordonnances*, one appeared to the effect that no longer was there to be permitted the attendance of

Protestant midwives upon women in childbirth, the unhappy people found an excuse. They said that the cause of this cruel edict was simply that the King was informed that these women frequently killed the infant to save the mother, that therefore the child was damned for want of baptism. Further, they maintained that, except for certain acts of cruelty caused by adroit stimulation, the general tendency of the King was to moderate the ecclesiastical furies.

There is no doubt that the King believed that he could save the souls of Protestant children by making them Catholics. It was a fine and easy mode of expiation for his own sin. Therefore, while he enormously enriched,—by money extorted from the poor—the cross-grained little Duc du Maine and various other offspring of the double adultery with Madame de Montespan, he considered that no methods of oppression were too severe in the prosecution of this pious work of redemption—of expiation.

A great event occurred in England in 1685 to raise the hopes of the Catholics in France. This was the succession to the Crown, unopposed, of the Catholic James II., who had been declared previously debarred from the succession. After the lapse of a hundred and twenty-seven years was now to be seen once more the glorious spectacle of the celebration of High Mass at Whitehall at Eastertide. The French clergy, directly afterwards assembling at Versailles, feeling themselves lifted up by this triumph, endeavoured to flatter Louis. Addressing him on the subject of the Protestants with marked moderation, they humbly thanked the King for having, "without violence, caused every reasonable person to abandon heresy."

The King determined "without violence" to subdue the Protestants of Béarn. He sent a large armed force under Foucault, the Intendant of that province; he also supplied Foucault with a hundred thousand copies of books written by Bishop Bossuet. It must have been a good time for the author and publishers of those books, which is fortunate, since no one else was allowed to profit by them

in any way. The soldiers carrying the books had not patience to sit by in the houses and cottages of the people until they read them through, especially as they talked Basque and could not understand them. There was a language, thought the dragoons, which would be understood quicker by far—the language of unbridled outrage, of horrible oppression.

There was a repetition of the scenes of the early days of Louis XIII. While the people were driven to the churches by the troops, the unfortunate maidens and matrons were driven to their death. Such of them as resisted were pursued into the mountains, where some of them, sooner than yield to the ravisher, saved their honour by leaping over the precipices.

At the same time in England the favourite judge of James, the infamous Jeffreys, was crushing in torrents of Protestant blood the rising under the Duke of Monmouth, the natural son of Charles II.

At this time the position of Madame de Maintenon was still insecure. One hold she had upon the King, and one only—she was the *garde-malade*, the nurse of Louis. His health became worse and worse. Although only forty-seven years old, the acidity of his blood, heightened by his injudicious mode of living, caused him more and more suffering. Thus caries set in, in the bones of his face, with the result that a hole established itself in the jawbone. While this increased the King's violence of temper, it also increased his dependence upon his mistress. Still, she was not sure of him. We have the authority of Madame, the mother of the Regent, Duc d'Orléans, that Madame de Maintenon increased her hold upon the King when she played into the hands of the Jesuits and advised the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Madame says that "she wrote a memorial to counsel the Revocation," and there is no reason for supposing that she did not, since all her interests lay that way. Thus her marriage had become possible, and it probably took place but a very few days after that act of barbarity was

perpetrated. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes was promulgated upon October 18th, 1685, when, despite all that had gone before since the King's accession to power in 1661, it took the unhappy Protestants completely by surprise.

CHAPTER XXIX

Horrors of the Revocation

1685 AND LATER

"DRAGONNADE. The persecution of French Protestants —abandonment of a place to the violence of soldiers."

Such is the dictionary definition of a word which carried with it infinite terror to the ears of the shrinking Huguenots.

In 1598 King Henry IV., of Navarre and France, had given the Protestants of his kingdom the Edict of Nantes. By this, liberty of worship was secured to them—with certain limitations—and their marriages were declared valid. Further, they were declared eligible for certain civil rights, and were entitled to be heard in the Courts of law. It had been but a limited concession which their beloved Protestant leader, Henri de Navarre, had accorded to his faithful followers, who had fought behind him in a hundred battles before he accepted the tenets of Papacy, as a means of securing the throne of France.

Nevertheless, such as it was, it yet enabled the Huguenots to live some sort of a life, although the conditions of the Edict were but too often broken by their rulers at will. However, through the times of Richelieu and his successor Mazarin, the Edict remained in force. Eighty-seven years after it had been promulgated it was annulled; the Revocation was signed by Louis XIV. upon October 18th, 1685.

The whole tendency of the century had been towards the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. One could have seen it coming nearer, by degrees, ever since the death of Henri IV. in 1610.

As Spain had marched steadily onward from persecution to persecution, under the terrors of the Inquisition, so had Richelieu, and later Colbert, followed the fatal course which pointed to but one termination. Mazarin, the Italian Cardinal who came between, was too irreligious, too occupied with money-getting, the wars of the Fronde, and the successful establishment in life of his numerous nieces, to bother his head much about the Huguenots. From the coming to power of Louis, upon the Italian's death in 1661, things were, however, changed; the ill-treatment of the Protestants commenced at once.

There had been, from time to time, certain internal religious dissensions in France, which did not directly affect the great question, but which may, in a measure, have helped to retard it. Of these, one concerned the schism of Jansenism. The Jansenists, founded by Cornelius Jansen, Catholic Bishop of Yprès, maintained the views of Saint Augustine upon the subject of Predestination. They maintained, further, that interior grace is irresistible, and that Christ died for all. Commencing from the year 1668, there had been considerable disturbance over this question of Jansenism, but until years later it really amounted to little more than a storm in a teacup. One of the accusations made by Louis against the Pope, when, subsequently, he boldly declared his ultra-Gallican policy, was that the Holy Father was himself a Jansenist.

This great Gallican outcry also, after a few years, died of inanition. Then the Church of France, which, with the King at its head, had so strongly asserted its independence, changed when the King changed. The great Bossuet, even, mildly humbled himself to Rome, thereby proving that the Church of France was nothing but the shadow of the King's will. The Revocation and its fatal results

were far more important matters, although they too were but the outcome of the King's will, yet was he supported by the whole weight of the Church behind him ; a Church which had ever regarded the Reformed religion with horror and only panted for the blood—and goods—of its foes.

When the blow fell, the doors of escape were already closed, the emigration of Protestants, which had been forbidden for long before, was now enforced with terrible penalties.

It did not suit the priestly persecutors that the Protestants should leave the country with such goods as they possessed ; what was required of them was to remain in France, in order that they might be converted by force ; above all, so that their children might be torn from them. Thus a reward was given—of half the possessions of the victim—to the informer who denounced the intending emigrant.

The Protestants, however, who were the most laborious and skilful workmen of France, had not at first any desire to leave the borders of their native country, either by land or sea. They loved their homes, and all that they prayed for was to be allowed to live and die in them peacefully, while leading a God-fearing life. They trembled at the mere idea of tearing up by the roots the fibres which bound them to their native soil. Moreover, journeys were not made in those days with the facilities that there are ready to hand now ; thus, the fear of the terrors of the unknown deterred many from even attempting to escape. Some who had gone through all the worst horrors, when eventually dragged to the ports to be shipped off to America by force, died in despair at the last moment rather than leave their native shores.

When the Edict of Revocation was first issued, its terms were vague. The Protestant religion was abolished, the pastors were driven out, the children were to become Catholics, but nothing was said as to what was to become of the parents. It was not laid down that they were to

be allowed no liberty of conscience—even if the practices of their religion were denied to them.

Already, a month earlier, in order to lull their suspicions, while troops were being sent to every frontier, a little hope had been given to the Protestants, by the removal of certain difficulties which had been placed in the way of their marriages. Thus, when the blow was launched, and universal proscription declared, they were taken by surprise, and did not know which way to turn.

The first shock fell upon all the working classes in Paris, on the very day after the Revocation was declared. The police, descending upon them, informed them that they were to become converted upon the spot, when, in their terror, they made no objection. On the following day, the King ordered an assembly of all the *bourgeoisie* to make a declaration of conversion. Louvois told Noailles that it was the King's will that he should explain himself roughly with any who hesitated; whereupon Noailles, understanding, employed his dragoons.

Nor were dragoons the only soldiers employed; the whole army of France—at present at peace—was brought into requisition to coerce the Protestants. All these thousands of soldiers, accustomed as they had been in war time, under Turenne and Luxembourg, to live upon the inhabitants of the countries which they over-ran, were now loosed upon their Protestant compatriots. No pay or rations were given to them, they were told to enjoy themselves royally in the homes of the Protestants who did not immediately abjure their religion.

Luxembourg himself is said to have gaily remarked to his lambs: "Amuse yourselves, my children! pillage and violate!"

Whether the Duc gave the order in these words or no matters little, for that is how his orders were understood, and the troops did not have to be told twice. No soldiers were so gay as the soldiers of France! their merriment now had no bounds. No sooner did they enter into

the house of some respectable, sober Huguenot family than they commenced feasting and making merry—forcing the wives and daughters of the house to wait upon them while they sang songs of the most obscene description. In their merriment, they broke up, smashed everything. To an accompaniment of four or five drums beating at once, they ransacked the ladies' wardrobes, pulled out all the choicest linen—made merry jest over their articles of underwear. The finest sheets they took for bedding for their horses! If they found that tobacco annoyed their hosts, they compelled the trembling women to remain in the rooms with them while they filled it with smoke—and closed their mouths with kisses when they coughed. Where the dragoons entered they stayed, frequently all the men being turned out of the house to find shelter where they could, while the soldiers remained with the women at their mercy. The more refined the ladies, the more nice and particular they appeared to be, the more the soldiers delighted in enforcing upon them every disgusting task that they could invent or think of—"to humiliate the prudes!" When it is considered that the Protestant families were just those which were the most refined, in which, in a coarse, immoral age, the young girls were brought up in innocence and purity, the horrors of the thought-out cruelties of these fiends can be imagined.

In spite of all, the women held out against conversion better than the men in many instances. Although sometimes there were twenty soldiers alone in a house with one lady, nothing they could do, no indignity or outrage which they could inflict upon her—and some are too horrible to mention—proved successful in making her recant.

In one house, at Nîmes, there were a hundred soldiers with only one lady—her fate can be imagined! Those of the better classes were those who resisted conversion the longest, even when, in addition to the other humiliations, the soldiers resorted to blows, often in vain flogging the women upon their bare skins with willow wands, or pulling out their hairs one by one!

Every torture which human ingenuity could invent, the fiendish soldiers inflicted upon the Protestants within whose houses they were quartered. Of some they pulled out the nails—others were pinched with hot irons, roasted in ovens, pierced through with skewers, suffocated with smoke! Still, in spite of all, the martyrs held out.

When nothing else would avail to make Catholics of the tortured and miserable people, the last and most efficacious resource was resorted to, that of depriving them of sleep.

This, we are told (*MS. de Metz*), subdued many of the poor sufferers, whom no other torture could affect; but even this had less terror for the women than the men. Often the husband gave way who had held out against every other cruelty. Then the wife reproached him for his weakness, whereupon he took back his recantation. In fury, the soldiers drove him out with blows, and remained with his wife alone.

Claude and Élie Benoit—the latter quoted in his controversies by that good man Jurieu, who, from Holland, fought the battle of the Reformed Church against Bossuet—tell us of other terrors. For instance, some of the poor women were singed with burning straw like a fowl. Others, in winter, had buckets of cold water thrown upon their bare loins. Some, men and women alike, were blown out with bellows. Occasionally they were held suspended over the flames, in a sitting posture, and roasted!

"For violation," Élie Benoit says, "there was no punishment, unless it was accompanied with murder." To give the soldiers more freedom to do as they liked, no officers were put in the houses with them; while soldiers who displayed any signs of humanity—and there were some such—were cruelly flogged.

The Generals stood in the streets and laughed to see the delicate Huguenot women touzled and pulled about, when the soldiers thrust them out naked!

All that happened was known by the King and the Court. Here the casuistical cry of "A little evil for a great good" made all accepted, while Madame de Maintenon remarked, in holy piety, that "God makes use of all means!"

In addition to all these horrors, there appeared in December, 1685, the following terrible decree, "From the age of five years to sixteen, every child is to be carried off in the space of eight days"!

Little did it avail for the wretched parents to convert themselves, this order was carried out to the letter. Their infants of five years old and upwards were ruthlessly torn from them—to be placed in some cold convent among strangers—to be forced to remain long hours upon their knees upon the stones of an unknown chapel, while taught to repeat prayers, not comprehended, in the Latin tongue.

Already, twenty-five years before the Revocation, had commenced the carrying off of children. It was nothing new, therefore, for the poor mother, who had nothing but her God and her children, to be deprived of the latter. Now she was allowed to have neither. The married women, too, who persisted in resisting, were torn from their husbands and carried off to be imprisoned in some convent for life. Here the ignorant nuns held them in horror. Many of them could not distinguish their prisoners from Jewesses, or imagined that they had no other God than Calvin or Luther. Single women were similarly imprisoned. In the convents, the unfortunate women were none the less at the mercy of men. The almoner beset the prisoner in her cell, regulated her penances, and her prayers—upon him alone she depended for everything.

One of the most active, and yet austere, Bishops was the Bishop of Lodève. A letter of his, in the *Correspondance Administrative*, Vol. IV., written in the year 1673, throws a good deal of light upon the varied powers of the Bishops. He says, that he makes the Seigneurs communicate by

force, that he works vigorously at the conversion of the Huguenots, arranges all the civil lawsuits, encourages industry, and finally, improves the manufacture of the sheetings of Lodève.

Élie Benoit throws some light upon the strange manner in which—thirteen years later—this active but ferocious Bishop is still working vigorously at the conversion of Huguenots.

In 1686 he had a young lady imprisoned in his episcopal prison. Daily he went to catechise her. Daily also, seeing that he had no success, from words he proceeded to abuse and blows, punching her brutally with his fists, beating her most unmercifully!

The Bishop of Lodève was not the only cleric who ill-treated his victims. Many Catholic ladies about the Court, to please the King, determined to show their zeal by taking some of the recalcitrant ladies into their hôtels, personally to superintend their conversion. Among them were Madame de Saint-Simon, Madame de Lamoignon, and others. The *curés* who reigned supreme in the elegant homes of these devout ladies, made the lives of the prisoners terrible. With no one to control their actions, they gave way to their uncontrolled fury at the expense of their miserable victims. So far did they carry this ill-treatment that even la Reynie, the King's very severe head of the police, found himself compelled to interfere, because—so he wrote to Harlay the magistrate, who agreed with him—"some fear to make themselves Catholics for terror of being handed over to the zealous, the devout." Upon one occasion he writes, that he has had "to admonish a good *curé* who, *from good intentions*, would throw all out of the windows!"

The terrible fate which befell some of the victims of the dragonnades—innocent young ladies—almost surpasses belief. Marteilhe tells us, that those who were caught endeavouring to escape in boy's clothes were treated as being prostitutes, and thrown into the horrible places of correction used for the women of the most abandoned classes. In this

hideous society, those who did not die of despair were not always allowed to remain. They were plunged into a deeper gulf still: the horrible "Hôpital," filled with the most degraded and wicked people of France. Sometimes this so-called Hospital contained no less than seven thousand souls—it was a horrible sea of vices and maladies where all licence was permitted to the inmates and attendants alike. It has been called the Gomorrah of the dying. Yet Louis XIV. himself said of one Protestant lady, "I give her three months, and then she will go to the Hospital." Truly, the zeal of the Court ladies was only equalled by the devotion of the King himself!

Some of the most marvellous resistances made to conversion were those made by the martyrised children of tender years, many showing the most obstinate tenacity. Those whose fathers and mothers were of different religions always elected for the Protestant. One little girl of only four or five, who was put in a convent for eight years, still desired to be returned to her Protestant father; another of nine, to her Protestant mother. Carried off several times, she refused to change her religion.

The sufferings of these children were great, and many died. The Comtesse de Marsan handed over a little Protestant boy, named Brun, to her servants to make sport with. They beat him, tossed him in blankets by the hour together, put him in *the latrines*, kept him awake constantly by nudging him, until the poor little martyr died at last—for want of sleep. But he died a Protestant after all!

Two little girls, named Mirat, were orphans of eight and ten when they were carried off from their grandmother by the Archers of Meaux. They broke the glasses and threw themselves out of the carriage. Time after time the soldiers had to restrain them. Placed with a Catholic, the little girls ran away to a relation, who took them to that prince of kidnappers, Lamoignon, the President of the Parliament. He put them in a convent at Charonne. They jumped over the walls! Recaptured, Lamoignon

locked them up in his hôtel. The fury and cries of the girls was such, their violence so prolonged, that the King ordered them, when they had become big girls, to be returned to their relations at Meaux. They were still unconverted. To his shame be it said, Bishop Bossuet, after vainly endeavouring to convert them, contrived to get an order for their imprisonment in his episcopal prison at Meaux. What became eventually of the sisters Mirat, Élie Benoit, who inquired, never knew. When last he heard of them they were still in the hands of Bossuet.

Many of the convents caused young girls to be carried off by the dragoons as a matter of speculation. When they knew that there were such who had a talent with the needle, which could be employed for the convent, it was not long before some rough soldiers brought the girls captive to the convent doors. Others again were captured for the convents because they were rich and could pay. The Bishop of Montauban carried off a girl of fourteen and put her in a convent at Bordeaux—because she would have a hundred thousand crowns!

In the convents of "New Catholics," which in the time of the dragonnades were created everywhere, the nuns resorted to severe discipline. At Uzès they devised the horrible idea of flogging, before male witnesses, eight young ladies between sixteen and twenty years old. Both Jurieu and Élie Benoit describe how, in the presence of the Judge of Uzès and the Major of the Vivonne Regiment, the furious nuns uncovered and flogged the unhappy girls—with straps armed with pieces of lead! The screams of the poor young ladies, thus martyrised by these furies of hell in the garb of religion, were heard without the convent walls, in the streets.

The horrors of the dragonnades were endless. Shiploads of young women and old men were carried off to America—more than half dying on the way. The galleys were filled with Protestant pastors, who never recanted under the overseer's whip. Among the galley-slaves was Marteilhe, who has given us his touching story, which shows

the noble spirit and fortitude with which all alike cheerfully suffered for their religion.

But what can be said for the King who ordained all these horrors? or of those about the Court—including his wife, Madame de Maintenon—who said, "God makes use of every means"!

CHAPTER XXX

Fénelon and Saint-Cyr

1686 AND LATER

When the desolation wrought by the Revocation and its attendant horrors had caused the flight from France of four hundred thousand people—to swell the armies of William of Orange and enrich by their industries the peoples of other lands—there yet remained a million of people who had been forcibly converted. The continuance of these in secret, or in many instances openly, of the practices of their old religion was the cause of terrible cruelties being inflicted. This was notably the case in the Cévennes. The Cévennes is a mountain range in the south, in Languedoc and Dauphiné, and here the continued persecutions soon developed a strange prophetic instinct among the people, especially the very young. A condition of somnambulism or trance seizing young children and girls of a marriageable age, they prophesied, and preached with an unceasing flow of words, their predictions—especially with reference to the arrival of the troops—frequently coming true. Their preachings had all the same tendency. Penitence, respect of the King, and resignation to his will formed their almost universal theme. Nevertheless, this submission did not prevent the most terrible butcheries of the peasantry, of whom the most renowned prophetess was a lovely young girl known as La Belle Ysabeau.

While the soldiers overran the fastnesses of the Cévennes, driving before them, as their guides, women whom they

stripped and pricked with the sword or bayonet point, the Archbishop or Vicar-General, du Chayla, was perhaps the chief torturer. He was killed at length, when the risings in the Cévennes became known as those of the Camisards; but in the meantime, for sixteen years, he inflicted his cruelties at will. Warlike, cruel—immoral to a degree—du Chayla was at once dictator, inquisitor, and oppressor. He had his own troops to carry off the people, and his cellars were kept filled with prisoners whom he tortured. The clerical writers of those days, de Brueys, de Louvreleuil, and the very free and libertine Bishop Fléchier, all alike shock us by their immoral laughter, their hearty French jests upon the subject of the women. What wonder, then, if we find the merry *amourettes*, the libertine side of things upon which they delight to dwell while behind the protection of the armies of the South, but an echo of what was practised under the roof of the inhuman du Chayla! The torture of his male prisoners, which he conducted personally, brought women to his doors—the wives and sisters of his victims. Of these women he took advantage—they gave themselves to purchase the release of those dear to them, writhing in agony in the cellars of the priest's castle. Often, alas! the sacrifice of these pious and God-fearing Protestants was in vain; the men being no sooner released than they were recaptured, to be sent as prisoners to Montpellier or Nîmes.

Of all the terrible massacres of the year 1686 and later, those of the Vaudois, usually unarmed, in the valleys of Saint-Germain and Saint-Martin upon the confines of Savoy, were perhaps accompanied by the most awful and heart-rending cruelties of which the French soldier in his merriest moments of relaxation has ever been guilty. What sufferings the unhappy women were made to undergo surpass belief. The two sisters Vittoria, half dead after having suffered every fiendish outrage at the hands of the soldiers, were lashed down to and burned upon their beds! Daniel Pellenc, who is our principal historian for these events, details worse things still, which the unhappy Vaudois

maidens were forced to undergo at the hands of the French soldiers, sent by Louvois to combine with the army of the Duke of Savoy. So cruel were they—so bloody—that we will not relate them here; fortunately they cannot even be conceived by a healthy mind. What minds, then, must have had those devils from hell who inflicted them—in the name of religion!

As for the men and children, to throw them over the cliffs and watch them bounding from rock to rock was considered fine sport. To burn one limb after another—one after each refusal to abjure—was greater fun still! The soldiers, in their merriment, shrieked aloud when a man was skinned alive, all but his head, over which the skin would not pass. Nor was their laughter diminished when, with a rock upon his body to hold him till the wolves came, they left the unhappy, writhing martyr to his agonising fate.

Awful! awful!! awful!!! No wonder if the *esprits forts*, the *libertins* of the age, said that there was no God, when the torments of hell were everywhere inflicted in His name!

Meanwhile, since it was by no means the wish of the nuns who had Protestant ladies in their charge that they should escape from their tender fingers by death, a great many were left alive for perpetual bullying and punishment, many of them being girls of quite tender years.

Then it was that the idea occurred to some of the devout ladies of Paris that it would be a good thing to establish a convent in Paris itself for these new Catholics. Further, that a new régime should be tried upon those whom no severities had been able to subdue—a régime of kindness. The King and Madame de Maintenon having been brought to view the idea with favour, a convent with a beautiful garden was got ready in the district near the Palais-Royal. The question arose, who should be the Superior, Abbess or Prioress?

There were three young ladies in Paris then in high favour with Madame de Maintenon—sisters and duchesses. These were the three sisters of Seignelay—the violent

Minister of Marine, the son of Colbert. Their names were the Duchesse de Chevreuse, the Duchesse de Mortemart, and the Duchesse de Beauvilliers. They were the intimate friends of Madame de Guyon, the apostle of pure love and mystic death, and it was to see her that Madame de Maintenon often visited the three Duchesses incognito. There was another lady associated with them who was the corner-stone of their little church. This was the Duchesse de Béthune-Charost, the daughter of Fouquet, their father's bitterest enemy, he whom Colbert had kept in a prison for twenty years, until his death. Of these, Madame de Béthune-Charost was the admired and respected *grande âme* of Fénelon.

It was a time of barbarity so great that these ladies must have been Christians indeed to initiate such a good work. At that very time, dying women who—having been converted by force—avowed themselves Protestants at the last, were being dragged about naked on a hurdle before they died, their bodies being left exposed when dead. At Arvert a young lady, who was about to be married, died. She was dragged in this way, followed by her affianced in tears. He would not desert her body, despite the insults of the crowd, and buried it secretly by night. At Rouen the body of a lady named Vivien, after being dragged, was left exposed for three days to the insults of the boys of the Jesuit school. At Cany-en-Caux an official exhibited the body of a lady at so much a head, " to see the body of a woman who was damned " !

It was while even the hangmen were running away, rather than fulfil this dragging and still more brutal tasks, that these ladies instituted the régime of kindness. Moreover, they supplied Madame de Maintenon with the Superior of the new convent, who was a man instead of being a woman ; or if they did not supply the man themselves, they put it into the mind of Harlay de Champvalon, the profligate Archbishop of Paris, to supply him, as almoner. The man was Fénelon, a young priest of twenty-seven, the *spirituel* prelate—not over scrupulous—imagining that

the spirit of grace would best speak from his agreeable lips to the controversive young ladies in the new convent.

This was indeed a great and delightful change to the young rebels. Instead of the rough and uneducated country nuns whom they had had to ill-treat them, they found an all-pervading air of kindness from the first in their new abode. There, ready to receive them, were the outstretched arms of pious and charming ladies, anxious to tame these poor battered Protestant birds with sugar instead of the whip.

No longer were the black hole in some damp dungeon, or night-long kneeling upon the rough stones of the chapel, the dread penances to be feared. The house itself, instead of being damp, dismal, dirty—poisonous with the putridity of ages of dirt and darkness, was comparatively a paradise. There was air to breathe, a garden to go out in ; the ladies of the Court, too, coming in and out, paying visits in the convent parlour, to see how the good work progressed. Soon there was another charm added to the new life, after the terrible buffetings of fortune and often cruel blows, tortures, and insults of the dragoons. This was the hope of removal to Madame de Maintenon's playground, her very mundane religious school at Saint-Cyr. It would have been strange indeed if the young hearts of the orphan girls, or those as good as orphans, since their parents were lost for ever, had not breathed more freely, if resistances had not gradually become feebler, especially when their taskmaster was a young and charming man, pious, clever, and—say it only in a whisper—a Quietist in disguise !

For so it was ! Madame de Guyon some years before, after an angry remark which she made to the young priest in his seeming indifference, had left an impression. The pure love, the mystic death, were now as dear to Fénelon as to Madame de Guyon herself. But not for the world should Godet, the Saint-Sulpician, director of Madame de Maintenon, or Bossuet, Bishop of Meaux, be allowed to dream that such was the case. For they might at once tell the King—and the King, as we know, hated Quietism.

But what about Madame de Maintenon? Ah! that lady, for the time, was certainly consorting with the Quietists, as a relief from her ennui. But she changed later, and never was really a member of the sect. She probably had her doubts, or it may have been certainties, about Fénelon, from the first; but, if so, she did not tell the King, or let any hint of these doubts escape her—the talented priest was too much the friend of her friends, the only people among whom she found amusement and repose.

Saint-Simon says of Fénelon that "he had in him the elements of the doctor, of the Bishop, and the *grand seigneur*, that it was necessary to make an effort to restrain oneself from looking at him." He was the youngest son of an old man's love. His father, M. Fénelon de Salignac, married, when he had already a grown-up family, a young girl of noble degree, but poor. When the boy came into the world, he was not well received by his elder brethren, and his situation in youth developed a grace and sweetness, also a cunningness of tact, in order that he might be forgiven for living. There was something diplomatic, sinuous, and insinuating—at times feminine—about his character, which he probably inherited from his mother. Especially was this evident in his apparent humility and desire at the same time to please. He possessed all the arts calculated to make him succeed in the world; bright, quick, sharp, yet self-contained, he could win others without giving them too much of himself; he was able to deceive without lying—from that which he left unsaid. At the time that he assumed the control of the convent of the young girls still Protestant at heart, Fénelon was remarkably refined in appearance; rather weak than robust, he was distingushed and well-bred to a degree.

The education of this brilliant young man, after commencing with a good classical grounding, had been carried on in the Parisian Jesuit school, in which his uncle feared that he would learn too much and too quickly. Fénelon was accordingly transferred to Saint-Sulpice, a middle-class, duller foundation, one modest and uncompromising, without

the brilliancy or intrigue of the Jesuits, but still allied to them. There it was that the dry, unimaginative, and narrow Godet, Bishop of Chartres, also had had his bringing-up. The education of the latter never changed him or brightened him; but for Fénelon it was a period of rest which enabled his faculties to concentrate themselves for future development into something brighter, more subtle. The foundations of Saint-Sulpice and Saint-Lazare were of the same order. More Papal than Gallican, they followed the Pope's orders of 1604, went blindly ahead with closed eyes, without arguing over theological questions of grace; in fact, they followed the satirical counsels of Pascal—"Brutify yourselves."

We need not, indeed we cannot, follow the young Fénelon through his difficult task of arguing with, convincing the young girls under his care. There is not the slightest doubt, however, that he soon found that conviction from dogma to dogma was an impossibility with such as they. Doubtless, therefore, he confined his polemics to precept rather than argument, sank all his dogmas in religious tenderness, taught the stubborn Protestant girls to throw all upon the love of God, while throwing a touch of romantic mysticism into his teachings, without seeming to do so. Thus was he crowned by signal success, without his methods becoming apparent, either at Saint-Sulpice or at the Jesuits' Theological School; above all, without being suspected by Bossuet or the Court.

The secretiveness in Fénelon was, as we have said, great. While a saint, he was a prudent one, and his best friends never knew what he was going to do next. Whether as a preceptor of young women or of the young Duc de Bourgogne, the King's grandson, he astonished by his ability; when he wrote as a Quietist, he amazed; and when, as a political utopian and sentimental romancist, he produced *Télémaque*, he astounded.

While gently and discreetly guiding the leading-strings which directed his young charges into the way they should go, he encouraged the frequent visits of the ladies of the

Court. Soon, therefore, the young girls, finding themselves petted and made much of, began to turn their thoughts more and more towards that Court, wished to be of it. Their resistances vanished, especially when the beloved preceptor told the impressionable maidens that the most saintly and obedient among them would be picked out by Madame de Maintenon, to become in a way a part of that Court itself, to become the pets of the King—married perhaps by his Royal hand with a large dowry. It must be confessed that, if conversions were to be made, the methods of Fénelon were not only more agreeable but also more humanising than those of the country Bishops, such as the Bishop of Lodève and the Vicar-General of the Cévennes—or of the nuns of Uzès.

The instinct in Madame de Maintenon of instruction had developed in her, by her long subservience as instructress to the children of Madame de Montespan, a mania of ruling. She determined, therefore, to have a place of her own, wherein she should reign supreme over the young hearts it contained. In this manner she founded the institution of Saint-Cyr. She did so the more willingly, knowing the delight which the King would take in the sight of a bevy of young and pretty maidens, coquettishly dressed. In spite of her severity of *tenue*, the governess of Montespan's children had always been able to attract the young, even the little buffoon Duc du Maine, and the malicious sprite Mademoiselle de Nantes. The former, at her evident desire, even volunteered to turn his own mother out of Versailles, while the latter, who became early the most vicious Duchesse of the Court, seemed in her childish years to look upon Madame de Maintenon almost as a mother. Her early instruction did not, unfortunately, ever prove beneficial in the long run, for the girls whom she had under her hands invariably turned out badly—among them, her own niece, Madame de Caylus.

The nucleus of the *Abbaye Royale de Saint-Cyr*, of which there is a picture extant, giving the Marquise de Maintenon as *Supérieure*, was one little girl, the first new Catholic,

her own niece. In the year 1681 the Marquise—under the pretence of wishing to see her—kidnapped her Protestant niece la Villette, then only eight years old. The child, who at the age of thirteen became Madame de Caylus, was pretty, gay, lively to excess. Saint-Simon says of her, "that one was forced to smile as soon as she appeared." The King was delighted with the little girl, who, upon being promised that she should have the whip no longer, very soon became converted. The whip was freely used in good families in those days. The Dauphin was whipped by his nurses as a child, and beaten by Bishop Bossuet with a rod as he grew older. Cosnac, Bishop of Valence, also relates a story of a youth who had been made a Bishop at the age of fifteen. He found this youthful prelate, Croissy-Colbert, in the act of receiving a flogging from his preceptor, and begged him off the rest of his punishment.

Saint-Cyr was the third of three establishments in rapid succession. The first house, for young noble ladies, was at Rueil, the second and third followed at Noisy, then at Saint-Cyr, both in the King's Park. Louvois, very much against his will, was constrained to build this latter in a magnificent style in spacious gardens, and it was very richly endowed with the goods of Saint-Denis—so richly that the King was able to give large dowries to such of the noble young ladies as he married from Saint-Cyr.

In addition to Madame de Maintenon's niece, the young ladies who were called to the privileges of this establishment had to undergo certain proofs of poverty, nobility, and beauty. Upon one side at least, they were obliged to prove a nobility of a hundred and forty years' standing. For beauty, they were examined, to see that they had the body perfect in every respect. The ladies who served as instructresses were also all young and beautiful. They were dressed in an elegant black, with the hair in the latest fashion, a scarf of light material round the face was lightly tied under the chin, with the ends flying loose. It was coquettish and not religious, for the ladies were not nuns at first; the King did not then wish it so, although later—

at Maintenon's request—he inhumanly ordered all to take the veil. The little girls were also becomingly dressed, with a little lace at the neck and hair flowing loose. The King added ribbons to the bonnet, which he found too severe.

The education which was imparted was very mundane, also very musical. Upon the first occasion that Louis visited Saint-Cyr after the institution had been transferred from Noisy, he was received by a charming group of the ladies and the girls, who sang to welcome him what is now our "God save the King."

The *Dieu sauve le Roi* was written by Madame de Brinon, the charming young lady-superior, while the music was composed by Lulli, the talented Italian composer, who was originally a valet in the household of la Grande Mademoiselle. This was in 1687, and shortly after we find the inmates of Saint-Cyr being employed in another performance, which was of much greater import, since it was a combined stroke aimed at the minister Louvois and Protestant England, The performance of *Esther* was a *coup monté*, intended to work upon the emotions of the King and bring about serious results.

There was—owing to his mistake in prosecuting the war in Germany, instead of invading Holland and preventing William of Orange from passing over into England—now no better hated man than Louvois in all the Courts of France. We say all the Courts advisedly, for, in addition to Versailles and the very brilliant one of the now exiled James II. and his Italian Queen at Saint-Germain, there were many others in 1689. First, the Dauphin had his Court at Meudon. The various children of la Vallière, all legitimated and married, had enormous establishments, and those of Montespan also. The Princes of Condé and Orléans had married these love-children of the King, the eldest daughter of la Vallière being now Princesse de Conti. Thus, they all became so many little Queens, each with a Court and courtiers of their own. Villers-Cotterets, Chantilly, Anet, Fontainebleau, Choisy, Sceaux, Meudon, Saint-Cloud, Rueil,

Marly, Saint-Germain—all of these were Courts, in addition to that of the King at Versailles.

Marly was the principal of these, which had been created, with a wonderful system of water-wheels and aqueducts to make waterfalls, by Louvois. It consisted of a centre palace, that of the Sun, for the King. Around it were twelve other palaces, those of the twelve months, for the Court. No etiquette was permitted at Marly; every one was forced to remain covered in the King's presence, and to enjoy themselves there—by order! In consequence, it was the place where every one enjoyed themselves least, for no one could do anything in one of the palaces but it was known at once in all the other twelve.

To resume: in all these establishments Louvois was hated, and all wished for his downfall—save the King, who could not do without him. Nevertheless, he hated him more than all the rest, for that very reason, especially as the Minister openly said that what Louis pretended to do he himself accomplished.

On January 25th, 1689, *Esther*, by Racine, was played by the young ladies of Saint-Cyr, in the presence of the two Kings and the Queen of England, and all the Court. It was a hazardous play, which Madame de Maintenon had permitted—nay, ordered. By the Haman of the piece—the wicked Minister whose downfall was foretold—Louvois was plainly intended. The mountings were superb, and cost an enormous sum, while all the young girls, dressed in Persian costumes, were radiant, the two heroines being Esther, Madame de Maintenon's niece, and Elise—her then beloved favourite—Madame de Maisonfort.

This young lady was not married, but only called Madame on account of being a *Chanoinesse*. She was the most charming as also the most unhappy person of her age. Madame de Maisonfort became famous owing to the cruel ill-treatment of Madame de Maintenon in forcing her, for her whim, to take the veil, for which she felt no vocation. The religious disputes of Fénelon, who was her director, and Bossuet, over this cruelly treated girl, and her cousin

From a contemporary engraving.

LOUIS XIV.

Madame de Guyon, had subsequently such far-reaching effects as to shake the throne of Spain and to disturb seriously the Keys of Saint Peter hanging over the Papal Chair. The struggle ended leaving Fénelon—although an exile—still upon his seat as Archbishop of Cambrai, while Bossuet, who, backed by all the power of Louis XIV., had been nominally the victor, was really severely shaken by the wily manner in which Fénelon had conducted the battle. So shaken was he, that his death was the real termination of the great encounter.

In the play of *Esther*, both the girls were admirable. When they sang—passionately, with charming voices—the song of exile, intended for the banished King of England, all the Kings, Queens, and Courts were so vastly moved that they had their handkerchiefs to their streaming eyes.

The King of France had just turned his own country into a land of mourning, and caused the exile of half a million of his subjects. He was just about to permit Louvois to accomplish the most awful and cruel devastation of the Rhine and the Palatinate that a terrified Europe had ever seen. A month later, four hundred thousand persons were sleeping on the snow for want of hearth or home (February, 1689). Nevertheless, when Louis and Madame de Maintenon heard, from the pretty lips of the young girls, the plaintive words—

> Je reverrai ces campagnes si chères;
> J'irai pleurer au tombeau de mes pères,

they wept—their hearts were deeply affected! For all that, the play was a failure, since the King refused utterly to take the hint and hang Haman-Louvois. He refused even to see the allusion to the War Minister!

CHAPTER XXXI

Abuses of the Convents

1610—1700

The letters of Madame de Maintenon give a clue to the reason of her ceasing to follow, at Saint-Cyr, the methods of liberty and indulgence which had arisen from her intercourse with the excellent, if over-romantic, Madame de Guyon. From them we learn that, during one of the endless lectures which she was in the habit of inflicting upon the pupils, one giddy maiden irreverently allowed herself to indulge in laughter; another, from having acted as heroine in Racine's piece *Athalie*, and done so with great success, had formed too good an impression of herself. Accordingly, she showed herself proud and undisciplined in her behaviour to the patroness of Saint-Cyr.

This *Athalie* was a play performed before the two Kings, of France and England, which foreshadowed the death of William of Orange by the dagger, in the same manner as *Esther* had been intended to foreshadow the death of Louvois.

Athalie was performed at Saint-Cyr upon January 5th, 1691, and, in that year, Louvois was privy to the offer of Grandval to murder William III. This offer was accepted at the Courts of both James at Saint-Germain and Louis at Versailles; and Grandval was tried and condemned for the attempt in 1692.

The death of Louvois took place not long after *Athalie* and the brilliant success which he had engineered for Louis

in person, at Mons—in the presence of all the Princes of the Blood—in April, 1691.

Furious with jealousy of his Minister, the King took an opportunity of violently upbraiding him upon the subject of a defeat in Italy. Thereupon Louvois threw down his papers, and—stifling with suppressed rage—went out and died of apoplexy. In that age of poisonings, many attributed his death to poison; but natural causes seem quite sufficient to have accounted for it.

While taking the son of Louvois, Barbezieux, to succeed his father, the King, now fifty-four years old, nevertheless attempted by incessant and, according to Dangeau, solitary work, to rule the State himself. He did not, however, intend to neglect the affairs of James II. and William. His first words to an officer of the English ex-King and Queen, who came to congratulate him upon Louvois' death, were "that their affairs would not go any the worse for it."

To return to Saint-Cyr, that home of plots—which were made to spring as if spontaneously from girlish lips, in beautiful and impassioned language.

The indiscipline of the pupils was associated by Madame de Maintenon with the refined and handsome young ladies who, in return for the instruction they gave, were there supplied with a home under the shadow of the Court, themselves forming, in fact, a part of the Court. From that time Madame de Maintenon determined to break their wills, to overcome their humble resistances, and to reduce the place to the absolute dependence of a convent. Already was she the real Superior of Saint-Cyr; should the King die, she would probably become its Abbess, which would enable her to exercise the most complete power, the most absolute domination of body and soul over its young inmates, all of whom had been promised a dowry from the King upon their marriage—in the case of the girls, at the age of twenty.

What were the powers of the abbesses in those days may be here defined. They were indeed sufficient to cause

to tremble the lively young butterflies of Saint-Cyr, at the very idea of immurement as veiled nuns.

In many of the abbeys the position of confessor was one subservient to the abbesses. For not only did many of these preach, but also—after the fashion of Saint Theresa—they confessed. It was a man's power which—exerted in feminine hands—spared no feminine repugnances, was used more pitilessly than by a man. Either had the nun to lie before her God or to make the most humiliating and often irritating avowals.

There were plenty of means of subduing those who hid anything or strove to elude this too-close inquisition, every means were at hand to assist the abbesses. Thus canonical bleedings, or even, if required, cold poison, could be added to fastings—starvation. The abbess was able, further, to inflict such terrible penances as floggings, public humiliations, and the agonising trial of remaining for entire days upon the knees. A nun could be forced to make herself hated among her sisters by denouncing them. Then there were the dungeons, dark places of unspeakable horror. How they were sometimes used we know.

An example is to be seen in the case of the young Madeleine de la Palud, the Ursuline nun made celebrated in the case against the priest Gauffridi, the so-called Prince of the Magicians, at Marseilles in 1610.

This unhappy girl, from whom Father Michaëlis, the Pope's Inquisitor at Avignon, drew out—so he said—no less than six thousand six hundred devils at one time, in a gluey mass! had to be severely treated to make her say what was required of her. As—the Inquisitor owned it, to his chagrin—he had still been forced to leave a hundred devils inside her, it is to be concluded that poor Madeleine was not lonely when she was placed in a charnel-house full of dead men's bones, below the Archbishop's palace at Aix! When, however, the priests, the better to terrify her, came and rubbed these bones against her face, rather than face the horror longer, she willingly yielded. She

then accused, in addition to her lover Gauffridi, various innocent persons of witchcraft, who were burned alive.

To obtain the condemnation of Gauffridi—whom she loved—she pretended to be possessed by him, making "her proud, noble, devil Beelzebub" utter from her lips such blasphemies as "I renounce God in the name of Gauffridi! I renounce the Son of God!" To such a horrible condition was this poor girl reduced, by the machinations of the priests and of a really wicked nun—one whom conventual seclusion, added to jealousy, had turned into a demon incarnate. She, Louise Capeau, owned to three devils—Verrine, a good Catholic air-spirit; Leviathan, a Protestant devil; and thirdly, the Spirit of Impurity. To these she might have added the devils of eloquence and of lying, for she certainly possessed them both sufficiently, not only to confound the priests, but to bring Gauffridi and Madeleine to a bad end. The devil of murder likewise continued in Louise, with the result that she denounced many people after the death of Gauffridi and the imprisonment in a black hole of Madeleine. One of these was a poor blind girl named Honorée, who was burned alive.

Father Michaëlis finishes his official account of these celebrated events by remarking naïvely: "Let us pray to God that all is to His glory and the good of His Church!"

Another well-known case of the state of possession, that which occurred at Louviers, in the convent of Saint François, has already been referred to. It was brought about by the Illuminist teachings of Father David, succeeded by the immoralities of Fathers Picart and Boullé. Here, upon the accusation of the devil, also called Leviathan, present in Sister Anne de la Nativité, the miserable nun Madeleine Bavent was condemned to an eternal dungeon; it was a subterranean ditch, below a cellar full of rats and ordure, and called an *in pace*. The worthy Pénitencier d'Evreux who so condemned her fondly fancied that her departure would calm the convent. Far from it! The devil at once broke out in twenty nuns, who cried, prophesied, threw

themselves about, and behaved like wild things. A curious crowd from both Paris and Rouen was allowed to come and witness these performances, which were supposed to be supernatural. The fact was, in this instance, that a great deal of trickery was connected with the whole affair, although no doubt many of the nuns had become half crazy from what had gone on in the convent. Meanwhile, Madeleine was drawn forth at times and made to accuse innocent people, who were burned! *

Some centuries earlier than the reign of Louis XIV., the religious reaction in France had manifested itself by the building of many convents. Of these the first were Carmelite, Feuillantine (or of the order of Saint Bernard), and Capuchin establishments. The girls who, to get rid of them, were walled up in these places wholesale, usually died in ten years, of despair and ennui. Either the nuns died from a state of indefinite languor, or, the fervent blood of youth not being allowed to follow its proper course, they died hysterical, furious, stifled. Such would probably have been the case with Louise Capeau had she not found a vent for her energies in becoming possessed and committing murder. In either case, ten years was the limit, upon an average, of life in a convent.

To remedy this state of things, Saint François de Sales it was who first founded the Visitandines—nuns of the order of the Visitation—who were to be allowed to go out, two together, to visit the sick. César de Bus and

* Note—After having caused the unhappy girl to be stuck all over with needles—to find the devil's mark—the pitiless Pénitencier d'Évreux sought to have Madeleine burned alive. He offered money to a wizard to testify against her, but she was spared, to testify falsely from time to time as her tormentor dictated. Thus this miserable victim of priestly wickedness herself caused, among others, the death by fire of an unfortunate man named Duval, whom she had never seen! The evidence which she gave was merely what the Pénitencier had told her to say. Eventually, Madeleine Bavent was removed by the priests from Évreux to a dungeon at Rouen, when she was forced as a penance to demand pardon of the nuns of Louviers who had tortured her with needles!

Romillion, who had already created an establishment of priests of the Doctrine, in affiliation to the Oratory, now founded a similar house for women. That convent of Ursulines—of Sainte Baume, at Marseilles—in which Madeleine de la Palud and Louise Capeau both became possessed of devils, was the first Ursuline convent. Romillion, the founder, was a converted Protestant, and he imagined that, by giving the inmates the occupation of teaching to amuse them, he would be able to abolish the eternal and killing ennui. The Ursulines were also allowed to receive visitors.

The Visitandines were, it will be remembered, the nuns who first started the cult of the *Sacré Cœur*. In the beginning the Heart of Mary—the heart of a woman—was alone venerated by the women. To Godwin, an Englishman, and the Oratorian Eudes, as already mentioned, it was left to add the Heart of Jesus to the Heart of Mary.

As if there were not already enough foundations and establishments, in addition to the *Sacré Cœur*, James II. and his Italian wife were very anxious, after their arrival at Saint-Germain, in January, 1689, to be allowed to institute a new establishment, that of the *Cinq Plaies*, the five wounds of Christ.

A great believer in miracles himself, James II. was the object of the sly laughter, behind his back, of the whole French Court upon the subject of the miraculous birth of the Prince of Wales. James gravely asserted that this child had not come at all in the usual way of nature, but was the result of a relic, sent from Modena by her aunt to his Queen, who had hung it round her neck—hence the heir!

The cult of the *Sacré Cœur*, which had resulted in the miracle of Marie Alacoque, was one which was naturally dear to those in France who wished to support the reinstatement of James and his son—that is to say, all the Court. For it had been the priest la Colombière who—after his mystic union with the heart of Marie Alacoque in the Heart of Jesus—had gone to London to convert the

English nobles. It is therefore not surprising to find, in the last twenty years of the reign of Louis XIV., the enormous increase in the sisterhoods of this branch of the Visitandines.

Previous to these later establishments—from and before the time of Richelieu—scandal had been very prevalent in the convents ; for, in spite of walls and gratings, the priests had unlimited access to the nuns. The separation of the sexes, therefore, was only for men of the outside world ; it did not exist for the cleric. The director could enter every cell at will. The Vicar-General and his assistants could enter for inspection. The almoner not only came in to say the Mass, but—before and after it—was able to remain alone with a young nun, his *sacristine*, to prepare or arrange the chapel, the robes, the sacred vessels.

After the introduction of the very equivocal cult of the *Sacré Cœur*, it may easily be understood that this relieved the priesthood of the necessity for ancient precautions and reticences—the carnal suggestions of its doctrine being more than favourable to the director, the superior, or the confessor in opening an easy road to ecclesiastical seduction.

Woe, however, to the female recluse who dared to look outside the ecclesiastical circle for a lover ! An instance occurred in the case of the Prioress of l'Abbaye-aux-Bois, when the Abbé de Clairvaux, enraged at the lady's frivolities, insisted upon his rights over her, as her Superior. In an earlier age the Superior would have been able to throw her into a dungeon, where he would have visited her once a day, to *discipline her* ! The *Abbé*, however, merely insisted upon his right to enter her cell for that purpose ; whereupon this lady, who controlled a fashionable convent and one much visited in the Faubourg Saint-Germain, took up a bold stand. This was that any discipline was to be inflicted in public—she insisted upon being chastised in the presence of her nuns.

It will be remembered that the rule of Louis XIV. in ecclesiastical matters, was to avoid, when possible, any

public scandal. When, therefore, the over-free Prioress appealed to him, the King ordained that "the honour of the house" must be maintained. For this reason, he handed her over to the tender clutches of the Superior, whom he instructed "to hold her in a convent under his supervision." She was now at his mercy! The account of this affair will be found in Vol. IV. of the *Correspondance Administrative*; it occurred in 1692.

Nothing, perhaps, can give a better picture of the rottenness of the priesthood of the reign of Louis XIV. than the well-known irregular life of Harlay de Champvalon, Archbishop of Paris. Him, while running from a duchesse to a grisette by night, the people used to follow and hoot. Then was evident the disgraceful spectacle of the first prelate in France—one charged to watch over the manners and morals of all the priesthood—setting a notoriously bad example. Out of the goods of the Church Harlay is to be seen calmly appropriating a sum of sixteen thousand *livres* yearly, which he settles upon a little dressmaker. This Archbishop reminds us of his predecessor in the time of the Fronde, the bandy-legged and *spirituel* Cardinal de Retz, the lover of Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. Only Retz would have been more likely to have kept the sixteen thousand *livres* to spend upon himself!

CHAPTER XXXII

Flight, Prisons, Hospitals, and Galleys

1685—1690

We have not ever—in the whole history of Christianity—known of more continuous and painful sufferings, as the result of man's inhumanity to his fellow, than those which men, women, and children underwent in the reign of Louis XIV.!

For the histories of the flight from France, the recaptures, the miseries undergone in the so-called hospitals, the prisons, and the galleys, there are yet extant three touching recitals.

The first of these is the *Larmes* of Chambrun, Pastor of Orange; the other two are the recitals of Jean Marteilhe, de Bergerac, who passed twelve years in the galleys, and of a priest named Jean Bion, whose duties led him among the galleys. So horrified was this latter—so touched by the spirit of Christian faith and endurance of the Protestant galley-slaves—that he fled and himself became a Protestant.

The Pastor of Orange was in bed, suffering with gout and a broken thigh, when the terrible dragonnades took place in that town. The visitations of the troops, under the ferocious Comte de Tessé, were all the more savage on account of the supposed hatred of Louis for William of Orange.

No sooner were the troops in the place than shrieks and cries were heard everywhere. Women, drowned in tears, fled helpless and wailing through the streets. Some were lashed up with cords, but more often it was the men who were so treated and, while their wives stood by

screaming, were flogged unmercifully or roasted over a fire. While threatened with a dagger and flogged, a husband cried aloud to his wife, who, herself beaten, gave birth to a dead child!

The screams of the children were added to the horrors of the awful scene of desolation. "They are murdering my father! They are tearing my mother to pieces! They are going to roast my little brother!"—such were the cries that the pastor heard. Then forty-two dragoons came into the room where he was lying. Here the savages lit a hundred candles, tied the napkins round their heads, beat upon four drums, and smoked in the sick man's face, until some officers, entering, roused up the soldiers with canes they carried.

The unhappy wife of Chambrun had fled, but being captured and brought to Tessé, he said mockingly to her, "You alone shall serve for the whole regiment!" Begging for mercy, the poor woman was about to be handed over to the dragoons, when a monk, with whom the Chambruns were upon terms of friendship, had the courage to save her by telling a lie. He said, "She has done her duty," which Tessé took—as the monk meant him to—to signify that she had abjured her faith.

Madame de Tessé was allowed to carry off her husband in his agony, upon a litter, to Valence. Here, his wife being torn from him by la Trousse, a cousin of Madame de Sévigné, he abjured his religion. Later, when the pastor was cured, he escaped over the frontier by a ruse, disguised as a general officer in a carriage with four horses.

The terrors and barbarities which Madame Chambrun and four young ladies from Lyons underwent were awful. It was winter time: they were deserted by their paid guides, left alone in the mountains in the snow; there they wandered for nine days, and were tracked down like wolves. When, in despair, the young ladies wished to yield, the pastor's wife, with her own heroic courage, would not let them do so. Eventually she got them safely through to Geneva, which

little Swiss town, for four years, lodged and nourished no less than four thousand refugees, many of whom arrived within its precincts naked, while all were starving.

The inhabitants of Geneva were but few in those days, and the family life very stiff and reserved. All this reserve was done away with—their own beds, their own bedrooms and clothes, were given to the martyrised French Protestants by the noble Genevese in their overcrowded dwellings. The strangers were treated, not as intruders, but as honoured guests, and were given food and wine, while the hosts contented themselves with little to eat, and water to drink. Although the town was threatened with destruction and troops sent to enforce the expulsion of the refugees, when the Swiss turned them out by one gate in the daytime—in sight of the emissaries of Louis—they took them in again at night by another.

Louis, in fury, vowed he would destroy Geneva; but the Genevese never gave up three thousand of those they had received, while the adjacent cantons, or countries, of Berne and Zurich promised to send them thirty thousand troops, if required, to protect them.

Germany, too, gave aid to the refugees, and did so nobly. England gave money freely to those who reached her shores. As a return, many fought for the Protestant Faith against James II. A large number of the army which William brought from Holland was composed of French officers and men, while the Duc de Schomberg, a Frenchman, died for England at the battle of the Boyne, which he and Frenchmen did so much to win against James and his French Catholics, under the Comte de Lauzun.

The disguises which many women assumed in order to escape would have been comic if their condition had not been so terribly tragic; there was nothing that human ingenuity could think of that was not tried. Many young ladies disfigured themselves, while others dressed in male attire. Some, just as they were, without disguise, wandered about over forest and mountain, often among fearful men from whom they had to fear worse things than death.

How those were treated who were recaptured in men's clothes we have already related.

Marteilhe tells us the story of two young ladies who wandered about through snow and ice in the Ardennes for many leagues before they were captured and put into the same dungeon where he was himself. The joy was great when they found that they were all from the same birthplace. Marteilhe, however, has the honesty to record that, not being sure of being able to preserve his self-control, if left living alone in the dungeon with these young ladies, to protect them against himself, he contrived to get them removed. Although the separation was bitter to all, he preferred to be left to his melancholy solitude rather than run any risks of sin.

Many people escaped by ship, hiding themselves for weeks in the hold under casks or bags of coal. The awful experiences of the Comte de Marancé and forty others, some being women with newly born infants, in a ship without provisions, are harrowing in the extreme. For want of milk, the poor mothers gave the babes snow. At last nearly all reached England alive.

When we consider that not far short of half a million Protestants succeeded eventually in escaping, the sufferings of all can be imagined by these few examples. Alas! for those who escaped, double the number were recaptured, or never given the opportunity of making the attempt to fly. And for them, what was there?—the prison, the hospitals; and the hospitals were worse prisons than the prisons themselves. Then, too, there were the galleys, where men were chained to their seats for life, flogged incessantly from hour to hour—after having arrived naked on a chain from a journey which killed many.

There were no proper sanitary arrangements built even for the magnificent Versailles; imagine, then, what must have been the conditions of the hospitals and the prisons!

Many of the old convents, which were used for these latter, were dark and damp, and preserved an ancient, abominable smell which sickened the heart upon first entry.

If they had any sort of drains, great cracks in the flooring brought all their exhalations into the apartments where the prisoners were confined.

Some of the apartments of the prisons at Bordeaux were built of stones all anglewise, so that to stand up or to lie down was equally impossible, walls and floor alike being formed of nothing but corners! Rats, horrible vermin in swarms—even at times snakes—were present in the dreadful dungeons; while in the prisons on the Alps the water ran down the walls, and the cold of the snows struck a mortal chill to the unhappy captive. Teeth and hair fell out, dreadful agues and fevers racked the frame. Sometimes the prisoners were confined in charnel-houses; at others the sewer of a slaughter-house, full of the decaying entrails and the blood of animals, was the horrible place selected for the awful confinement of the martyrs.

The prisons being overflowing, the hospitals were next crowded; and of all the hospitals, there was none worse than that of Valence, under the auspices of Cosnac, the savage Bishop, the friend of Madame, he who encouraged her to so work upon her brother Charles as to risk the drenching of England in blood. When the dragoons and the Jesuits had no other tortures left adequate for some miserable prisoner, they said, "Away with him—to Valence!"

When, about 1669, Cosnac was exiled to his see, he became more savage than ever, owing to his disappointment in not getting the Cardinal's hat. Eventually, he found a more savage beast than himself to be the keeper of his hospital—or, to be more accurate—the butcher of his hospital.

This man was a musician, and one who had narrowly escaped death for an attempt to murder Lulli, the charming Italian composer of whom we have already spoken. Although, at Valence, he figures as the Sieur d'Hérapine, his real name was Guichard. Nothing need be added to demonstrate his infamous course of life, when it is mentioned that he was one of the vicious associates of Monsieur, Philippe d'Orléans.

Guichard, protected by the Royal Prince, became anxious to have the direction of the opera. Unfortunately, the King preferred to retain Lulli. Thereupon, "Lulli will die! What is the life of a man? Nothing! A pinch of snuff will do!"

Such were the imprudent words of Guichard. He obtained the "pinch of snuff," the dagger was also ready. Aubry, a police officer, was ready and willing to offer first one and then, if necessary, the other to Lulli. The charms of the Italian musician had not, however, been thrown away upon the sister of Aubry; she told him—and he told the King.

Monsieur had to listen to some very plain facts from Louis, and he with difficulty saved his minion, at the expense of a heavy fine. Aubry was driven out of France. Before leaving, he had had the temerity to accuse, of all men, Lamoignon, the man of the Cabal, of having had a share in the plot. It was in the time of the poisons. Brinvilliers was being pursued at the moment; every one was suspected. The worthy President, the kidnapper of Protestant children, did not, therefore, have his reputation improved. Neither did Guichard: people suddenly remembered that his father-in-law had died suddenly. Guichard left France in a hurry!

Ten years afterwards the Sieur d'Hérapine received from Cosnac, Bishop of Valence, the charge of his grand Hospital-General. It was the year of the Revocation. Here his genius soon taught him to invent everything that was awful, that was new; to introduce everything that was awful, that was old.

For the women prisoners d'Hérapine experienced a difficulty in finding men who would flog them absolutely without pity, after the blood came! This he remedied by getting a supply of strong, able-bodied women from the Rhone. These, he found, laid on to his satisfaction; they had absolutely no mercy for the *Huguenote*. They beat like furies! Thus the amenities were preserved—women had women to look after them! "The Court should be pleased," said the Sieur d'Hérapine.

There was another thing which pleased the Court about the hospital of Valence, until d'Hérapine suddenly found a necessity for finding a fresher air elsewhere. This was that no one lasted there long. The misery, although greater, while it lasted, than elsewhere, was over sooner!

While the misery in the prisons and the hospitals was such, what was the condition of things in the galleys, to which men were often sent untried—even boys of fifteen and under—for the crime of attending divine worship?

Before the departure of the chain of galley-slaves, they were confined in a prison at Paris or elsewhere. Marteilhe was imprisoned with many others in a circular vault in the celebrated Tournelle.

In this place, which was perfectly dark, the galley-slaves were chained by the neck to posts—thus they were unable to either sit or lie. Occasionally a keeper, armed with a whip of bull's sinew, entered and lashed about in all directions, the blows falling upon head, face, or body, according to chance. Cries and moans, from old men and young, rent the air in the shades, while some of the former died where they stood! The captain of the chain preferred that the sickly should be thus killed off first: it saved expense in hiring carts to carry the sick to the seaports, Toulon or Marseilles. The prisoners on the chain to which Marteilhe was attached were stripped of clothing in the dead of winter at Charenton, just outside Paris, and left so for two hours, while their clothing was searched for money. Many, in spite of blows upon their bare skin, remained frozen cold and stiff—eighteen in all died by the following night. And so they went on, dying at every stage, until the galleys were reached.

Here they were chained to seats, exposed to the weather and the salt sprays or seas washing inboard. There they were to eat and sleep and row—until they died. There was a hold to the galleys, a dark and low hole in which the provisions were kept and sick or dying convicts were thrown. The smell in this place was pestilential, and it was full of vermin. Bion the priest says that when he went in to

minister to dying men, he had to lie at full length alongside one dying, while touching him on the other side was one dead. He was covered from head to foot with horrible vermin the instant he entered this dreadful place.

Upon the poop of the galley sat the *Comite*, as the overseer was called, at a square table firmly fixed on iron stanchions. From this, long boards ran the whole length of the galley, and every now and then, cursing like a demon, the *Comite* would run along these, lashing the chained rowers right and left with a bull sinew, frequently drawing blood, especially when striking an old sore. When he was tired out, he sent his assistants, and if they did not lay on well—woe betide them! These *Comites* were usually members of the religious order of the Knights of Malta, were finely dressed with good clothes, and enjoyed good cheer, in sight of the starving, half-naked prisoners at the oar.

The most compassionate men to the galley-slaves as well as those who used to be forced to perform the cruellest actions to them, were Turks. These men were often galley-slaves who had been bought for the King, and they were not always so hardly treated as the prisoners confined for their religion. At the peril of his life, to obtain alms for his Christian companions, a Turk would go ashore in search of some friends who would remit a little money. Marteilhe relates that, when they succeeded, these compassionate Turks would offer up fervent thanks to God for their success.

For distributing money to others thé penalty was death—by blows from a stick. Of this, Bion, the chaplain, gives a full description, a M. Sabatier, an heroic martyr, having preferred to undergo the punishment rather than reveal the name of a banker who had sent alms to his co-religionists.

With naked body the victim was laid upon a gun, around which his legs and arms were tied. In a dead silence the largest and strongest of the Turks stood with a knotted cudgel, while behind the Turk stood the *Comite* with his bull sinew to thrash him and make him strike harder. The

cudgel very soon tore away the flesh from the poor victim's bleeding body, his bones were exposed, and still the beating did not cease! While the most hardened ruffians, murderers and worse, turned away their heads with tears in their eyes, the *Comite* called for salt and vinegar, which was poured and rubbed into the dying man's wounds. In Sabatier's case he did not actually die; the salt and vinegar had the effect of reviving him. But the unhappy martyr was a helpless idiot for ever.

It is no wonder that the priest Bion was touched at the religion of men who could remain true to their faith under tortures such as these; no wonder that he quitted the religion which permitted such atrocities to be committed, not now and again, but continually.

Even the *Comite* himself once showed pity to Marteilhe, when he found him returning to the oar to row, after his arm had been shattered by a grapeshot from an English frigate. Pretending to swear at him before his men, the *Comite* sent the wounded man from the oar, and at night spoke to him in secret, in these words: "I am afraid of the almoner! I would like to save your brethren, for if they are damned in the next world, they will be sufficiently punished."

Thus it is seen that the priest, the man of God, was, upon the galley as elsewhere, more to be feared than the greatest lay ruffian. Yet these priests were more often than not Lazarists, of the foundation of missionaries established by the merciful Saint Vincent de Paul in 1624, when half of France was starving. Such, then, were the hospitals, the prisons, and the galleys in the days of Louis XIV.—very Christian King of France!

CHAPTER XXXIII

Sea Combats and Piracy

1690—1695

In the year 1690, while William of Orange, with an army largely composed of Huguenots, was fighting at the Battle of the Boyne, England had been invaded by France!

The only invasion since the days of William the Conqueror was effected by Admiral Tourville when, after defeating the Dutch in the Channel, he landed and burned Teignmouth, in Devonshire. To his eternal disgrace, Admiral Herbert, who became Earl of Torrington, who was in command of the English fleet, sneaked away and hid in the Thames, leaving his brave Dutch allies to be crushed by the superior fleet of the gallant Frenchman.

The burning of Teignmouth might have been followed by serious results, had not the defeat of James II. and the Comte de Lauzun at the Boyne kept quiet the malcontents who were ready to rise for the Popish King.

After the death of Louvois, when Louis took over the reins into his own hands, the affairs of France were virtually ruled from Madame de Maintenon's chamber. In that sacred abode was it that the Ministers, now little more than clerks, debated with the King, or rather, listened to his orders. Madame de Maintenon herself usually sat silently by, knitting, and never volunteered advice unless asked for her opinion. Nevertheless, her influence was enormous—in her quiet way she usually contrived to gain her own ends.

With Seignelay, the son of Colbert, as Minister of Marine, and the devout great nobles, Colbert's three sons-in-law, she constantly backed up the tears of the Italian Queen of James, when she cried for renewed help to recover England.

The King, who for many years had had in his head the grand idea of the conversion of England, was brought round to agree to their views; the only question was, would there be a sea-expedition, to which Louis would not go, or another land-expedition against William in Holland? Madame de Maintenon was for a sea-expedition, especially as the young ladies of Namur and pretty young canonesses of Mons had, when Louis had been last at the wars without her, come out and made their obeisance to him. It seems that his spouse did not, after these little events, feel that she could trust Louis alone any more. When he went to the wars, as he still proposed doing, Madame de Maintenon determined therefore to accompany him; but, as she could not move until the warm weather arrived, the King would have to wait.

In the meantime an army of ragged Irishmen and not very well equipped Frenchmen was collected near Cape La Hogue, under James II. and Gigault, Marquis de Bellefonds. At the same time Tourville was ordered to do three things at once—to capture the Levant fleet of merchantmen, to protect the coasts of France, and to escort the army of James over into England.

Never was an Admiral more hampered by continually contradictory orders than Tourville in 1692. Moreover, nothing was ready for him—neither provisions nor powder. Since Colbert's death the *bureaux* had all become neglected, the insolent clerks often writing impertinent replies to the most reasonable demands. One such was when Tourville wrote to complain that his powder, such as he had, was bad and would not carry far. The reply that he received was that "he would only have to go the closer to the enemy!"

Affairs did not improve when Madame de Maintenon replaced Seignelay at the Admiralty by Pontchartrain, who was already Minister of Finance.

Pontchartrain had armies to the extent of four hundred and fifty thousand men to provide for, when he was requested to make the navy fit to fight the combined English and Dutch. Half of these armies were ill-armed, unpaid, and in rags, chiefly living by pillage. Since there was no money for them, the navy was still left unprovided for. Pontchartrain got no new ships ready, nor did he provide the forty-four at Tourville's disposal with a sufficient supply of munitions. All this caused delay, until an invasion which would have been perfectly practicable in March became almost an impossibility in May, by which time the English and Dutch had been able to assemble their ships from all quarters.

Tourville was a very gallant man with a majestic presence. A Knight of Malta, he had had his first experience in command of galleys in the Mediterranean. His great knowledge of naval matters and his bigoted Catholicism made him a popular man at Court. In his fleet, however, there was discord. All the Protestant officers had left, but the trace of Duquesne, the old Protestant sea-dog, remained. Gabaret, Tourville's second in command, had served under Duquesne, and was mutinous to Tourville; he even went so far as to accuse his chief of want of courage. There were other dissensions. M. de Villette, a lately converted relation of Maintenon, was at feud with d'Amfreville, the son-in-law of the Maréchal de Bellefonds. To make things still worse, there was in existence a bitter rivalry between the officers of the land forces and the navy. Thus, they would not work together.

In the middle of May Tourville left Brest for the Channel, and Louis, with the ladies of the Court, started to join the army called the Army of the North, which was the only one properly supplied. Having the King's written orders to attack the enemy wherever he should find them, Tourville, with his forty-four vessels, boldly engaged ninety-nine English and Dutch vessels off Cape La Hogue. A contradictory order had been sent by Louis, but did not arrive in time to stop the combat.

Since Gabaret objected to engage the enormous combined fleet, Tourville showed the King's written order, while placing his lieutenant in the place of greatest safety. The result was what might have been expected: in spite of the greatest gallantry of the French, they were defeated, and had to endeavour to escape. In the retirement, about fifteen ran for shelter into a shallow port near where Cherbourg now stands, right under the guns of the French army, under King James and Bellefonds. Here, all save one ship remained upright upon their keels; the one exception was a vessel commanded by Scepville, a nephew of Bellefonds.

For three days the English, fearing the land army, left these ships in peace—all except three, which drifted out towards them at high tide. Instead of the French war-ships trying to run out again in the night—instead also of their being surrounded with stockades and covered by batteries from the army—nothing was done but to talk over the situation with the land commanders. Eventually, the English came in boats and burned the ships under the nose of James, firing some cannon-shots in derision, one of which killed the horse of an officer standing near him. Such was the result of the jealousy of the services, that neither did the army want to help nor the navy to receive assistance. Thus, all the ships were lost, and the cause of James and the Stuarts lost too, for ever, at the Battle of La Hogue.

From that day a new-born confidence filled the heart of the British sailor, and during the rest of the reign of Louis England not only claimed to be, but was, the Queen of the Seas.

The cause of James was as much ruined by himself as by the loss of the French ships. Russell, the English Admiral, was a Jacobite, and most of the English and Scotch nobles were Jacobites at heart. All of these he alienated by a foolish proclamation, issued while waiting to invade England. In this he said nothing of pardon, but talked of the punishments that he would inflict when

he regained his kingdom. Each one trembled for his own head, and Russell, for one, fought instead of retiring, as had Herbert in 1690.

Thus, the last time that James was ever fated to hear the cry of "God save the King!" was when the English sailors shouted it at him, in mockery, as the bay was ablaze with the burning ships at Cape La Hogue. Much merchant shipping was also carried off from a neighbouring bay; but, in the matter of the destruction and capture of merchantmen, the French were soon to have their revenge. For their man was ready—his name was Jean Bart.

After the battle of La Hogue the sole naval war in which Louis indulged was one of piracy. No longer were the Dutch or English trading-vessels able to issue from the ports, save in fleets convoyed by men-of-war. Upon these the men-of-war of France descended, often making great captures. Before the battle in the Channel under the eyes of James, d'Estrées, the Admiral of the Mediterranean fleet, should have arrived to help Tourville, had not the weather prevented him. Luckier in 1693, the two combined to attack the Levant fleet from London, consisting of four hundred vessels which left the Thames at once. Catching them, off Lagos, they dispersed, sunk, or took an enormous number of the poor merchantmen. The English were only the more embittered to continue the war with greater fury.

Worse than the regular men-of-war to escape from were the ships of the corsair whose home was Dunkirk. In front of Dunkirk England constantly kept a squadron cruising; but this corsair, or privateer, Jean Bart by name, was too clever to be captured, while always able to issue forth at will to prey upon merchant vessels in the northern seas.

Of Norman origin, for long had the Bart family been established as corsairs in the Flemish town of Dunkirk, where there were many more of the same kidney, who always found a rope at the yard-arm ready for them when

they fell into Dutch hands. Knowing this, an uncle of Jean Bart blew up himself and his ship rather than be captured. His name was Jacobsen, and his nick-name the Old Sea-Fox.

These men knew the North Sea and the Channel in minutest detail; rocks, sand-banks, currents, tides, were as familiar to them as the streets of Dunkirk. Thus they were enabled to perform prodigies, to dare the most perilous actions, and usually with success. Marteilhe, when a galley-slave, saw Jean Bart's brother, who was always drunk, save a whole fleet of galleys, which had been brought up from the Mediterranean at frightful peril, and take them safely into Dunkirk harbour.

Jean himself commenced as a smuggler, at the age of twelve, under a ferocious leader named Picard; after which he took service under the gallant Dutch Admiral Reuter until twenty-one. With Reuter he sailed up the Thames in the days of Charles II. He was a tall, fair-haired man, with blue eyes, a good colour, and a pleasant, frank expression. So strong was he that once, to make his escape from England, he rowed unceasingly for two nights and days. No boaster, he was kind and charitable —that is, when not engaged in killing; he was not a great talker, but always engaged in thinking out some new warlike exploit.

Hard up for money as were the French Ministers Seignelay and Pontchartrain, they employed Bart, and his far more cunning comrade Forbin, for the benefit of the State, with the most immense results. Forbin was a Provençal, and commanded the *Jeux*, while the ship upon whose decks Bart performed his most daring feats was named the *Railleuse*, from which names it will be seen that fun and laughter evidently entered largely into their programme, of which the greatest delights were the boarding of ships, cutlass in hand. Two terrible young men served under them—Cassart, of Nantes, and Duguay-Trouin, of Saint-Malo. This latter, who was notoriously devoted to women and play, said that he soon found more

delight in the hand-to-hand combats than in his other recreations, although that, at first, the very idea of boarding a ship made him tremble.

Jean Bart—the Bear of the North—it was, however, who carried off the palm from all his fellows, whether for bravery, dexterity of seamanship, or success. Always able to get in and out of Dunkirk at will, he burned seven hundred Dutch vessels, in addition to taking numberless English prizes. In the year 1694, when France was starving, Jean Bart took such a convoy of wheat into French ports as brought down the price of wheat from thirty francs a bushel to three. For this feat, when his son came to announce it at Versailles, the King sent back a patent of nobility, for which the good-humoured, illiterate pirate had no need. The vicious daughter of la Vallière, the Princesse de Conti, sent him back at the same time a flower which she had worn.

Shortly after this exploit, Jean Bart succeeded in burning fifty-five English ships; but, despite all his successes, the English remained masters of the seas. In the years 1693 and 1694, by the use of infernal explosive engines, they succeeded in destroying Dieppe, also in very seriously injuring Dunkirk, and almost blowing up Saint-Malo and Havre. Had it not been for the treachery of Marlborough—who was frequently in communication with the Court of Saint-Germain—Brest would likewise have been most certainly destroyed. Owing to this, the great engineer Vauban arrived at Brest in time to crush with his bombs Marlborough's fellow-countrymen whom he had betrayed.

One of the most striking instances of piracy which occurred during the reign of Louis XIV., while amusing as an example of one set of thieves despoiled by another, had otherwise the most terrible results.

A set of private individuals having formed a company, got a fleet together, which they put under the command of an Admiral named Pointis. This man, to assist him in his nefarious design of robbing the South American town of Carthagena, where there was much gold, engaged

the services of twelve hundred filibusters, the greatest rascals, to assist him. The town yielded by capitulation, when—instead of keeping his word with the pirates, with whom he was to divide—Pointis made off to sea with all the gold.

In their revenge, the inhuman scoundrels wreaked their fury upon the helpless inhabitants of Carthagena. Save at the taking of the Elector Palatine's undefended town of Heidelberg, by Mélac, in 1693, never were women more awfully treated than the poor creatures who were left to the mercy of these demons in human form. Indeed, the horrors were worse than those of Heidelberg, where the French soldiers surprised all the women taking refuge in the churches. For, in the case of Carthagena, violence was accompanied by cruel tortures and murder.

Such were some of the results of piracy as practised in the reign of Louis XIV. ! In Heidelberg the excessive gaiety of the French soldiers did not go so far—they merely contented themselves with disinterring the bodies of the dead Electors, and dragging them round the churches, in their grave-clothes, among their weeping victims. The body of the father of Madame, the second wife of the King's brother, they treated to the extra honour of decapitation. For had not Louis given orders especially " to chastise " his relations, the Palatine and the Savoyard ?

CHAPTER XXXIV

Louis' Generals and their Battles

1693—1708

The reign of Louis XIV. consisted of one long-continued period of wars and slaughterings, to such an extent that the modern reader marvels how it was that any men were left alive in Europe! With such continual warfare, almost every prince and noble of note either was or aspired to be a General. In the earlier times the leading figures were le Grand Condé and Turenne, with Gassion, Rantzau, Guébriant, Sirot, and Schomberg as their lieutenants. These were the giants—heroes of the Thirty Years' War, Rocroy, the Fronde, and the Imperial and Dutch Wars preceding and following the Fronde. Contemporary with and later than Turenne and Condé, we find Boufflers and the Duc de Luxembourg, who died in the early part of 1695. The latter defeated William III. both at Steinkirk and Neerwinden. Contemporary with Luxembourg and the later years of Turenne, we first see Vauban, the engineer and artilleryman, who entirely revolutionised both the sieges and defence of fortified cities, whose bastions and parallels have served as models to engineers ever since. Vauban outlived both the others. Although, with his bombshells, he reduced the science of killing behind walls to perfection, Vauban was a humane man, his idea being that by greater severity at first wars would last for a shorter period. Moreover, he showed a reforming, philanthropic, and revolutionary spirit, by the book which he published upon

the subject of the equalisation of taxation upon rich and poor alike—which publication caused his death in disgrace during the last years of the King's reign.

Since, so late as 1706, we find Vauban offering to assist la Feuillade and the young Duc d'Orléans at the siege of Turin, we may consider him as being the continuous link between the Generals of the earlier wars of Louis and the later campaigns after the time of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The last occasion upon which he took a really prominent part in the wars of Louis was in June, 1692. Then under the King's eye, and although the great Dutch engineer Cohorn was in the place, Vauban was successful in reducing Namur.

It must not be forgotten that Louis himself was a General, although his attempts at figuring as his own Commander-in-Chief did not redound particularly to his credit. Before fortresses, with Vauban to back him up, Louis was able to succeed—and reap all the glory. Upon the two occasions, however, when he found himself in a position requiring the offer of a pitched battle, the Grand Monarque distinctly showed the white feather. The first was when opposed to William of Orange before Bouchain in 1676, when the then Marquis, afterwards Duc de la Feuillade, kissing his boots, begged the King to take care of his precious health—which he did.

The second occasion was after the fall of Namur, in 1693. The King, Madame de Maintenon, and all the Princes and Princesses, were living and making merry in that town, when the Duc de Luxembourg, realising the effect which a refusal to fight would have in the eyes of Europe, fell upon his knees to Louis, to beg him to be present at a battle which he proposed to wage with William III. Instead of doing so, the King gave to his ladies their marching orders, and started off with them back to Versailles.

When he had gone, Luxembourg fought the battle and won it. It was a magnificent fight, and fell out as follows—at Neerwinden. In spite of having detached a considerable force to the Rhine, Louis was in superior numbers before

he left the army. Luxembourg still had the advantage in this respect when the King of Great Britain and Ireland threw twenty thousand of his men into Liége. William then remained with fifty thousand against eighty thousand of the French, having occupied both the villages of Neerwinden and Neerlanden, near the rivers Saar and Geete.

The bravery and obstinacy of the Orange Prince was magnificent. Having strongly held and fortified the village of Neerwinden, the place was lost, retaken and lost, and retaken again. While the various French Princes of the Blood-Royal repeatedly headed furious charges, William himself—on foot four times during the battle—fought in the ranks of his own infantry. With the broad ribbon of the Garter and a diamond star upon his breast to make him conspicuous, without a cuirass, of which, on account of his feeble health, he was unable to support the weight, the English King fought like the humblest of his foot-soldiers throughout the furious encounter. During the combat three bullets grazed his person. One of these cut the blue ribbon of the Garter, another passed through his wig, while the third ripped through his coat.

While, upon the one side, the asthmatic King was so heroically comporting himself, upon the other, Luxembourg, who was a humpbacked dwarf, repeatedly headed the most brilliant onslaughts. The fury upon both sides was frantic upon that July 29th, 1693. In the end—after William had lost seven thousand of his men, while ten thousand Frenchmen were also laid low—the King of England drew off the remainder of his troops in a masterly manner to Dormal, losing, however, many more of his men by drowning in the river at Neerhespen. In this battle Brigadier Churchill, afterwards Duke of Marlborough, took prisoner his nephew the Duke of Berwick, the illegitimate son of King James II.

Whatever may have been said to his disadvantage throughout his career, the conduct of William of Orange at the Battle of Neerwinden has for ever stamped him as a hero.

During the following year, in the conflicts against the Duc de Villeroi, who had with him the King's son by Montespan, the limping and pusillanimous Duc de Maine, William's General, the Prince de Vaudemont, with inferior numbers, made good his escape, while Maine waited to confess himself and say his prayers.

William also had a glorious success in September, 1695, which was an ample revenge for Neerwinden, in which reverse he had lost not only over seven thousand men but sixty-nine pieces of ordnance. While Villeroi and his charge Maine were amusing themselves, with eighty thousand men, in bombarding convents and lace factories—killing many women in Brussels and other inoffensive cities—the gallant Maréchal de Boufflers,* with only sixteen thousand, threw himself into Namur, before the rapid advance of William with British troops and allies. William had with him the able Cohorn, burning to avenge himself at that Namur from which the skill of Vauban had put him out in June, 1693.

While William besieged the town, Boufflers, from the tower of the citadel—into which he had been driven in August by the furious attacks of the English soldiers and Dutch Guards, under the heroic Lord Cutts—heard the joyful sound of the French guns. Villeroi had arrived with his eighty thousand; Boufflers was even able to see them and the smoke of the hundred guns with which the Duc was saluting his comrade in distress.

At Versailles, where the gravity of the situation was well known, there was the greatest excitement. The King and Madame de Maintenon had taken the Communion, while the Holy Sacrament remained exposed in the Royal Chapel. William of Orange was supposed by the Court

* Note.—Louis François, Duc de Boufflers, was the son of François, Comte de Boufflers, and born in 1644. In 1669 he was raised to the grade of Colonel of the Dragoons, and in 1690 created General of the Army of the Moselle. Boufflers was made Maréchal de France in 1693, and in 1694 appointed Governor of French Flanders and of the town of Lille. This most gallant soldier died at Fontainebleau in 1711, aged nearly 68.

to be in the greatest danger—it was confidently imagined that his death-knell had rung.

Alas! for disappointed hopes. When the Duc de Villeroi saw the position which William had taken up, he realised forcibly that the task before him was one more difficult than shelling factories of tapestry or crushing beneath bombs convents full of helpless nuns. He retreated with his enormous army, and left Boufflers to his fate—when the valiant Maréchal fought until he had lost over ten thousand of the men with which he had garrisoned the town. It was not, however, until he had most gallantly and honourably repulsed another tremendous assault upon the citadel, in which the gallant Cutts was wounded, that this, the most clean living of all the French Generals, was to surrender.

The recapture of Namur, upon September 5th, 1695, utterly destroyed for France that military ascendency which she had held since Rocroy. It did for William and the allies on land that which the Battle of La Hogue had effected on the seas; moreover, it enormously strengthened his position in England, where his bravery and success had made him popular. If he was a hero after his defeat at Neerwinden, he was doubly so after the capture of Namur had plainly shown to Europe his brilliant qualities as a General. Thenceforward the European coalition was ready to obey the English King—all, that is, with exception of the shifty Duke of Savoy. This Piedmontese Prince, Victor Amadeus II., chose the moment after the fall of Namur to go back again to France. A few years later—when one of his daughters had become the heiress to the honours of the Crown of France, while the other was already the wife of the French King of Spain—he thought the moment opportune to leave France once more, to join his Savoyard kinsman Prince Eugene, the son of Soissons and Olympia Mancini, in fighting with Austria and England against his two young sons-in-law!

Strange were the times indeed, when neither family relations nor family treacheries counted for anything!

One day a man is welcomed at the Court; the next, orders are given to cut his throat with peculiar ferocity. A week later he again becomes the honoured guest, while in the following month he is doing all that lies within his power to blow his late entertainers—connected to him by the closest ties of blood—in little fragments to Kingdom Come!

The fall of Namur and mention in connection therewith of the Maréchal de Villeroi enables us to resume the thread upon the subject of the French Generals who came into notoriety, in one way or another, in what we may term the later period of the wars of Louis XIV.

Boufflers, Villeroi, the Duc de Vendôme, the Maréchals de Villars, Catinat, Marsin, Tallard, Vaudemont, the Duc de Bourgogne, the Duc d'Orléans, the Duke of Berwick, the Duc de la Feuillade—such are the names which, between the years 1690 and the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, constantly meet the eye of the student; also are they, more commonly than not, to be seen in connection with misfortune. Nor were these misfortunes, in many instances, so much the result of their own incapacity and laziness as of petticoat government at Versailles—the absurd policy by which no commander was allowed to make a move without direct orders issued from Madame de Maintenon's apartments.

Whether, during the time of Pontchartrain or when Madame de Maintenon's favourite the lamblike Chamillart was constantly closeted in the chamber which served as council-room, there was constant interference; the Maréchals being directed from Versailles or sent about from one army to another before they had got to understand properly the nature of their commands. Nor did the King, until after the death of the young Duchesse de Bourgogne in 1712, ever realise to what an extent he had been the puppet of that frivolous and wily young lady and of Madame de Maintenon, who, for reasons of her own, found it necessary to pull with that Savoyard Princess, even when doing so was against the best interests of France. Above all, he had no idea of the circumstance that—through Madame

de Maintenon's spies placed to watch that young Princess of the house of Savoy—every action in the council-chamber, in the days of the War of the Spanish Succession, was carried straight to Eugene. We will content ourselves with alluding to the matter now, to refer to it more explicitly later on.

We have already mentioned Boufflers as being an honest and clean-living man. This circumstance it was which lost him a wife, and threw a young lady, sadly in need of guidance, into very bad hands. It will be remembered that Madame de Maintenon's first pupil, she who played the part of Esther in the drama at Saint-Cyr, was Mademoiselle de Villette, her niece. Very early, at the age of thirteen or fourteen, this young lady, who possessed great personal attractions, displayed a rebellious spirit towards her aunt. The Maréchal de Boufflers having proposed to relieve the aunt of her care by taking her as his wife, Madame de Maintenon refused, saying that he was too honest a man and far too good for such a baggage. Instead, she gave her niece in marriage to the worthless Marquis de Caylus, after which she was able to go her own way, which, in company with some of the legitimated Princesses—daughters of Montespan and Vallière—proved by no means to be an edifying journey.

We have already described how Boufflers had to yield to William at Namur; let us now see his experiences at Lille, during the War of the Spanish Succession.

In August of 1708 the Maréchal was at Versailles. There, in the interests of the King, he was watching Chamillart. From the days of 1704 the King had already established an occult ministry—of three saints of Jesuitical tendencies—to keep an eye upon Maintenon and Chamillart, whose Saint Sulpician and anti-Jesuitical tendencies did not at all meet with the Monarch's latter-day views.

This secret council consisted of the Ducs de Beauvilliers and Chevreuse, to whom was added—the ex-pupil of Fénelon—the Dauphin's eldest son, the pious Duc de Bourgogne. Fénelon, the enemy of Maintenon, pulled the

strings from his exile in Cambrai. To this pious cabal Boufflers had been joined.

When, upon two separate occasions, Prince Eugène had succeeded in bringing armies and immense convoys of siege stores before Lille, Boufflers left his comfortable post at Versailles, he having persuaded the King to allow him to attempt to save the frontier town. By admirable tactics the old Maréchal contrived to throw himself into the place, and there, for four months, he nobly sustained the siege against Eugène and the allies.

In the meantime the pious young Prince, Bourgogne, although a member of Fénelon's peace-at-any-price party, had been put in command of an army, of which his cousin the brave but evil-living Duc de Vendôme was the actual chief. After the disastrous battle at Oudenarde in 1708, in which Vendôme, with the right wing, alone fought gallantly, this descendant of Henri IV. and Gabrielle d'Estrées openly insulted the son of the Dauphin. Seeing him about to retreat, Vendôme exclaimed furiously, "You will it so! One must then retreat? It seems to me a long time, Monseigneur, since you have been only looking for the opportunity!" After this cruel remark, the Duc de Vendôme forcibly prevented the timorous counsellors of Bourgogne from arranging the departure of the Prince in a post-chaise.

The serious and warlike Duke of Berwick, the illegitimate son of James II. by Marlborough's sister, having been sent to strengthen the young father of Louis XV. against Vendôme's violence, his counsels, nevertheless, were not wise. Instead of proceeding direct to Lille, much time was lost—a great deal of it being taken up with public prayers and religious processions. The young Prince amused himself by observing the stars with an English telescope, and by playing at battledore and shuttlecock. They were already in front of the enemy, and Lille was falling, when M. de Gamaches, a young nobleman attached to the Prince's person, became enraged at his childish pursuits, and addressed him without respect. "I

don't know, Monseigneur, if you are gaining the kingdom of Heaven, but it must be confessed that Marlborough and Prince Eugène set to work far better to gain that here below!"

While the Duc de Bourgogne went on with his toys, Lille fell; for again Vendôme, who had the King's orders to attack, had been thwarted. This time it was by Berwick—who urged a further reference to Versailles.

When, at length, the Minister Chamillart arrived with definite orders to attack at once, it was too late. Prince Eugène had, with his fortified lines, made the plain between Vendôme's army and Lille perfectly impracticable. After cannonading for a time, the relieving armies drew off—they did not even prevent the arrival of an enormous convoy of provisions for Eugène.

The brave Boufflers repeated his gallant deeds at Namur when deserted by Villeroi. For two months longer he held out in the citadel against repeated assaults. Only when he received the definite order of the King to yield, upon December 10th, 1708, did he consent to capitulate. After this, nothing arrested the course of the French disasters; everything went by the board. When the news arrived that Lille had fallen, Bourgogne, who had remained late in the field that autumn, did not even lay down his battledore or interrupt the game at which he was playing.

The good intentions but childish, religious scruples of Fénelon's young pupil resulted in his absolute incapacity. In the most thrilling moments of the war he inquired if he would not be committing a sin in taking a lodging in a convent of nuns? Fénelon—who had made him what he was—exclaimed upon hearing this, "Oh, how such a state of mind must please God!" It did not, at all events, please Paris and the French people, among whom the Prince's want of decision, energy, and other princely virtues were bitterly satirised and rated at the figure they deserved.

Men of altogether different types were Villeroi and Vendôme. We will consider the former.

At fifty, indeed still at sixty years of age, the handsome

Duc de Villeroi, bubbling over with vitality, was the pet of the Court, the darling of the ladies. By no means without courage, he was the King's personal friend and favourite, in spite of his frequent reverses when in the field, the result of his ineptitude. Nor, in spite of his openly immoral life, was Villeroi disapproved of by Madame de Maintenon. On the contrary, he was constantly in her counsels when, by his babblings to the dangerous Chevalier de Lorraine and General de Vaudemont, another Prince of Lorraine, with two sons Generals in Eugène's army, he did much to give information to Prince Eugène. It seems strange that Louis should have continued to place confidence in Villeroi —to regard him as a friend. For the man was, for all his waving plumes and fine attire, nothing but a windbag without brains. He had not even the ability to conceal his want of all capacity. Louis himself had frequently to blush for his favourite, while explaining to him, as to a child, matters in a manner calculated to be grasped by his feeble intelligence.

Strange too is it, in an age which prided itself as being witty, clever, *spirituel*, that the Duc de Villeroi should have been approved by the ladies of the Court. Yet, in spite of his advancing years, that, until the age of seventy, they tolerated the old coxcomb, is a remarkable fact. Among others, Saint-Simon tells us that for fifty years of his life Villeroi was ever irresistible, that there was not a single lady of the Court of any rank or importance with whom he had not had a successful affair at some time or other. At the age of sixty the Duc had in Paris a little house of assignation. To this, between intervals of actresses and suchlike, the ladies of the Court would resort—to get tipsy with the charmer. The second Madame, Elizabeth Charlotte, the mother of the Regent, is explicit upon this point. Such, then, is a picture of the friend of the King, whom he called *mon favori*—the friend too of Madame de Maintenon, in her so-called piety!

Upon the field of Mars we do not find the favourite so overpowering as within the Courts of Venus. We

have already seen his lamentable failure to relieve Maréchal de Boufflers in Namur; we will now follow him to Cremona, whither he was sent at the beginning of 1702 as a support to the Maréchal Catinat. This Catinat was a firm and capable commander, one of the best that France possessed. We hear of him chiefly in connection with the wars in Savoy and Piedmont, an appanage of Savoy.

In 1690 the French burned and ravaged the land of Piedmont, a compliment which was returned with interest when, in 1691, the Piedmontese invaded France, killed, burned, and ravaged in Dauphiné. To revenge this insult, in 1693, Catinat with an army made a second furious assault upon Piedmont. He destroyed the country before him, ruining everything—granaries, store-houses, villas, palaces, pictures, and statues. Food for the body and food for the mind, all that pleased the eye, were alike ruthlessly demolished. It was the autumn season, and nothing was left for the inhabitants but to starve miserably during the following winter.

Upon October 4th a furious battle was waged by Catinat at a place called by the French La Marsaille, where, in the Piedmontese ranks, were present quantities of French Protestants. Religious hatred upon both sides added to the fury of the combatants. The bayonet, which in older days used to be screwed into the muzzle of the gun, could now, in France, be fastened on the outside of the barrel, much as we use it to-day. Thus, the musket could be fired with the bayonet fixed, and a volley immediately followed by a charge—an immense advantage to the assailant. The French Catholics had these bayonets and used them terribly upon the French Protestants. The butchery was frightful, and continued in the pursuit, when the Piedmontese and Germans under the Duke of Savoy were bayoneted almost to the last man.

It was during an engagement in Flanders, in one of William III.'s campaigns, that the English army first had to meet this improved French bayonet, there being three regiments in the French ranks armed with it in that affair.

The British 25th regiment, which had been raised by the Earl of Leven in only two hours in Edinburgh, in March, 1689, and is now the King's Own Scottish Borderers, were doomed first to suffer from its efficiency.

The 25th were first fired upon, and then, greatly to their astonishment, instantly charged by a French regiment. They suffered much loss in the unexpected charge, which occurred while they were screwing in their own bayonets into the muzzles, in the old manner. Recovering themselves, under Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell, the old Edinburgh regiment boldly charged in turn, and gallantly drove the French regiment off the field.

The author of these pages had the honour of serving for many years in the regiment thus surprised, and it is with pride that he is able to recall their prowess upon this occasion, when they came off so much better than did the French Protestants, fighting against Catinat, when similarly astonished by the new arm.

Catinat, who was not in favour with Madame de Maintenon, had been left with nothing but recruits in 1701. With these he was able to accomplish but little, either in Alsace or Italy. To give him courage, that giddy young man the Duc de Villeroi was sent with orders from Versailles to set him an example.

The first exploit of the sixty-year-old Duc was to shut himself up in Cremona without guarding the place properly. Upon a winter's night, early in 1702, while the King's favourite was snugly between his blankets, Eugène, with no less than five thousand of his men, entered Cremona by a sewer. It was by the merest chance that a regiment, getting up very early to prepare for an inspection, found that the place was full of the enemy. They instantly fired a volley upon the intruders, which not only brought Villeroi from his bed, but the rest of the garrison. The Maréchal was immediately captured by the enemy ; but the garrison displayed greater ability without their commander, and broke down the bridge by which eight thousand more of Prince Eugène's men were approaching. After a very long

combat from street to street, Eugène beat a retreat with his prisoner. Whether or no he got out of the town again, taking Villeroi by the sewer through which he entered, we have been unable to ascertain.

What, however, is certain, is that the ancient spirit of ridicule, the lampoons and witty party songs of the days of the Fronde, were revived in Paris by the outbursts of hilarious laughter which greeted the inglorious capture of the darling of the Court.

The next occasion upon which we hear of Villeroi as a commander is in 1706. In the preceding winter Louis had given his favourite, still in favour after his release, the very large army of eighty thousand men in Flanders. Four times disobeying the orders which the King sent after him, telling him to wait for enormous reinforcements under Marsin, the Duc hurried on to his ruin at Ramillies. He wished to obtain all the glory for himself, but the measures which he took were feeble in the extreme.

Having placed his left so as to be useless, in a swamp, while leaving his centre thin and weak, Villeroi was furious with a General who plainly told him that his dispositions were such as to court disaster. His army was penetrated in the weak spot and crumpled up, whereupon a fearful panic seized upon his whole force, which fled in the wildest confusion (May 21st, 1706).

As a result of the battle, Marlborough soon had the Low Countries—Bruges, Brussels, and Antwerp all fell into his hands.

CHAPTER XXXV

Story of the Spanish Succession

1700—1704

Although, by the Peace of Ryswick in 1697, Louis, in addition to yielding up all the cities that he had taken in the Low Countries and his conquests beyond the Rhine, had acknowledged William III. as King of England, he did not keep to his bargain. For when James II. died, on September 12th, 1701, his widow and Madame de Maintenon prevailed upon Louis to recognise his son. This action proved a fatal blow to the Stuarts and the hopes of the Catholics in Great Britain.

England aroused herself as a lion from her slumber—as a giant enraged, she shook her fists at the thirteen-year-old Pretender and at France. The former, in his absence, was condemned to death at the scaffold. To the latter, Queen Anne, the Pretender's half-sister, who succeeded William in March, 1702, hurled defiance. Against the French Protectors of her brother's lost cause, the new Queen of England declared war on May 4th, 1702.

There were other causes which led to this war, in which most of the States of Europe became involved, and which devastated the Continent for no less than fourteen years. These causes led to its name—the War of the Spanish Succession.

Charles II. of Spain was the brother-in-law of Louis XIV., although very much his junior, since his elder sister Marie Thérèse had married the French King. He was also his cousin, since Louis' mother, Anne of Austria, a Spanish

Infanta, had been the sister of Philip IV. of Spain and daughter of Philip III.

The Emperor Leopold, of Austria and Germany, was also the brother-in-law of Charles, having married one of his second wife's sisters; likewise was he his cousin, being the son of an aunt of Charles II.

Another close relation there also was of the Spanish King. This was the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, a young man who was the grandson of the youngest of his sisters. He was the most probable heir, or, at all events, the one who would have been most welcome to Spain. Other ties there had been which had bound Charles closely to France: he had married Marie Louise, the French King's niece—a charming Princess, the eldest daughter of Madame, Duchesse d'Orléans, the daughter of Charles I. of England. This amiable young Queen died, it was suspected of poison administered by Olympia Mancini, wife of the Savoyard Comte de Soissons, whom she also poisoned; Olympia, it will be remembered, was the mother of Prince Eugène. By poisoning Marie Louise, who died without issue, Olympia did a good turn to Austria, and opened up the field for her son's future greatness in command of the Imperial armies.

A short time before Charles II. of Spain was upon his death-bed a treaty of partition had been made between the Powers of Europe, by which, upon the death of Charles II., Spain, the Netherlands, and the Indies were to go to the Archduke Charles of Austria, the second son of the Emperor Leopold I., while the whole of the Spanish possessions in Italy were to go to France. Further, the territory of Milan was to be exchanged with the Duchy of Lorraine, whose Duke was to be summarily transferred to the new Duchy in Italy.

In spite of this treaty, there were forces at work in Spain to resist this wholesale dismemberment of the Spanish Empire, which had already been sadly weakened by the aggressive policy pursued by Louis ever since his marriage with Charles's sister Marie Thérèse.

To see how these forces worked, we must revert to

Spain itself, where endeavours were being made to induce Charles to leave Spain as a whole in his will to one country or another. Here priestly influences were largely at work. Froilan, the Spanish King's confessor, had already obtained leave from the Grand Inquisitor to consult the devil in a possessed person, to find out why the King had no son by his second wife. She was a Princess of Neubourg—of the house of Bavaria, the enemy of Austria—but, on the other hand, the sister of the Empress of Austria, and therefore in favourable intelligence with the Imperial Court. The devil, consulted by permission of an Inquisitor favourable to France, promptly replied to Froilan that an Austrian devil had bewitched the King.

Considering that, at an *auto-da-fé* upon the marriage with the sister of the Empress, a hundred and eighteen persons were tortured, while eighteen were burned alive, in order that the grace of Heaven might descend upon the Queen and make her fruitful, it was naturally considered that Austria, in allowing its devil to work, had behaved very shabbily. Fortunately, another Grand Inquisitor, succeeding the first one, who died, righted matters by finding out that it was a French devil that was really to blame.

Moreover, Froilan had to fly to Rome, for sorcery; his real crime being that he had boldly persuaded the King to establish a Grand Junta to investigate the abuses of the Inquisition. While in Rome, Froilan endeavoured to obtain from the Pope, Innocent XI., the canonisation of the very holy Marie d'Agreda, who had been dearly beloved of Charles's father, Philip IV., to whom she brought the consolations of the Virgin to console him for his losses in Portugal, Roussillon, Flanders, and the Azores. Against this canonisation Louis fought with the Pope tooth and nail—he would not even allow his young brother-in-law to have the saint of his choice!

At this time there was great misery in Spain, the nobles selling all their furniture to foreigners for food, while even the King and the convents were forced to

part with their jewels and their pictures. Under these circumstances, it must be allowed that the action taken by the King of France against his relative was more than unkind.

We cannot go further into the matter here than to say that, in the end, Froilan was sent back to Spain, to be imprisoned, while Charles lost his saint—whom the Pope did not dare to allow him. A real Italian, this Pope wished further to preserve his country from the Germans. Therefore, when consulted upon the subject of who was to be the successor to the throne of Spain, he sent back word to Charles that "in conscience, he ought to choose a Frenchman."

The Queen of Spain having by a ruse contrived to get rid of the army of Germans with which Harrach, the Imperial Ambassador, was terrorising the Court and Spain, she was left with a free hand.

The dying Charles, at his Queen's suggestion, made a will by which he left the crown to a grandson of Louis XIV., upon condition that *he should renounce succession of the throne of France.* He died a month later—regretting the will that he had made. And thus, in the month of November, 1700, had Charles II. bequeathed to the world a legacy of woe. The young Bavarian Prince died almost at the same time; thus the rival claimants to the crown would be reduced to Austria only—if, that is, Louis XIV. should agree to accept the legacy. Seeing that, by the terms of the Act of Partition, the Mediterranean would be turned almost into a French lake without accepting it, it was quite upon the cards that he might refuse.

We must now fly upon a magic carpet to the Court of France, and there make acquaintance with a young lady who had a good deal to do with the subsequent proceedings.

The fairy who, with a touch of her magic wand, was to turn all Europe once more into a sea of blood, was a child whose marriage, which had taken place two years earlier, was consummated with the Duc de Bourgogne, the eldest son of the Dauphin, upon October 23rd, 1699. She was a

Princess of the house of Savoy. Marie Adélaïde was the eldest daughter of Victor Amadeus II. and of Anne Marie, who, as the daughter of Madame, had been known as Mademoiselle de Valois. She was thus descended from both Charles I. of England and Henri IV. of France. From the former it is probable that she inherited her utter disregard of the probable result of her actions, and from the latter that lightness of character and disposition for which the jovial King of Navarre was so famous.

The little Duchesse in 1700 had just reached her fifteenth year. Grace and accomplishments she had to the full. Without being, at that early age, a beauty, she was bright, *espiègle* to a degree seldom seen. Rather dollish than otherwise, with ardent dark eyes, she was a romping child full of tricks, one of which, until quite recently, had been to lie upon her back and have herself pulled along by the legs. By her pious young husband, the Duc de Bourgogne, she was adored ; by the King and the Court she was idolised. By Madame de Maintenon—whom she humoured by calling her *ma tante*—she was rather supported than petted ; but, as she took liberties with the old lady and made her laugh whether she would or no, Madame de Maintenon was compelled, like the rest, to submit to the charm with which the cunning young girl's presence filled the boring dulness of Versailles. For, of Marie Adélaïde's cunning, as of her ambition, even at a very early age there was no doubt. More than half of her flattering Italian graces were displayed for no other reason than to gain her own ends—nor, as will be seen presently, were these ends always trivial.

Not caring for her husband, the girl from an early age developed into a flirt, who carried her flirtations beyond the bounds of prudence. We will not now consider that side of the character of Madame la Duchesse, but accompany her to the famous chamber of Madame de Maintenon, where the Royal family are assembled to consider the will which—if accepted—is to make of one of her brothers-in-law the King of Spain.

Here, the legacy, as it lay upon the table upon November 8th, 1700, was viewed by those who surrounded that table with varying eyes.

Louis XIV. regarded the document as our father Adam must have looked upon the forbidden fruit. He longed to take a bite, but feared the bitter after-effects. With a wisdom hardly to have been expected from him, he was not inclined to touch the coveted morsel—and said so. Madame de Maintenon went further. She considered the terrifying bequest of the Spanish Empire as if it were one of Vauban's bombs about to explode. With prophetic insight she saw its fragments tearing the two worlds into little pieces, and was anxious for its immediate removal. The Duc de Beauvilliers was thoroughly at one with the uncrowned Queen, looking with terror upon the devil-sent legacy, beneath whose folds he saw a sinking France.

It was with other eyes that the Princes—the Dauphin, and others of the Royal blood—gazed upon the dangerous present. With hands eager to be outstretched, they watched as though it were the golden apple of the goddesses three. With them were Barbezieux, the son of Louvois, and Torcy, the young and ambitious Minister of Foreign Affairs.

It was while the three Fates, in the shape of the King, his spouse, and the pious Beauvilliers, with gravely deterrent glances, restrained the growing impatience of those eager to snatch at the golden bauble, that a clear, girlish voice rang out, in tones of mock giddiness, "I think that the King would be very silly to refuse Spain for his grandson!"

The little Duchesse had spoken! She alone it was who had dared, by this apparently childish expression, to give vent to that which was in the minds of most of those there assembled. Nor was there any girlish intent, but a woman's ambition, hidden behind the words, uttered as if the mere result of spontaneous ebullition.

Marie Adélaïde of Savoy had a younger sister, Marie Louise. In her mind's eye she already saw this sister where she intended to place her, upon the throne of Spain.

She herself had come to Paris as the gauge of peace with Savoy in 1697, when a child of twelve, and would, if all went well, some day be seated upon the throne of France. What more could be done to enhance the glory of her house than to open up for her sister, also not yet thirteen, the way to a marriage which would make her Queen of the neighbouring State? The ideas in the *rusée* young girl's head were by no means transparent to the others there assembled when, by her seeming *étourderie*, Madame la Duchesse thus broke the ice.

There was much speaking after that remark, during which Barbezieux and Torcy—full of flattery for both the King and the Dauphin—dared to combat the objections both of Madame de Maintenon and of the King himself. Step by step, they argued the matter.

M. de Beauvilliers, on the other hand, appealed to the heart and conscience of the King, pointed out to him boldly the horrible barbarity of, with a France already wallowing in the mire of misery, recommencing a war which must inevitably be with a combined and powerful Europe. The consequences, he said, would be too terrible. Moved by the Duc's arguments, the King for a moment experienced a sensation of honesty, charity, and real religion. Pushing upon one side the tempting demon, which offered him the kingdoms of this world—he refused the will!

The Dauphin and the family would not have it so, and, in a further council assembled in Madame de Maintenon's apartment, the King's son, for once, spoke not only with decision but with fury. His face red with anger, although respectful in his manner towards the King, Monseigneur declared that "Spain was his own birthright; that he consented, for the sake of the peace of Europe, to give it to his second son, the Duc d'Anjou; but that to no one else would he yield an inch of territory." His manner was such as to intimidate all present.

Torcy had already argued at length to the King that it would not, in any case, be a question of deciding between war and peace, but between one war and another.

After the Dauphin's violent declamation, Louis turned to Madame de Maintenon. "And what is your opinion, Madame, of all this?"

Foreseeing the day, which might not be long distant, when, the King being dead, she would be left without any protector, the poor woman faltered—lost herself in words, in praises of the Dauphin. She did not dare any longer to assert her opinion.

Saying "*La nuit porte conseil,*" the King, still in a state of indecision, broke up the assembly.

There is no doubt that during the night Madame de Maintenon still maintained her attitude of reserve. She had fought for the right, but knew how to play her cards too well to fight too long against the King's own inclinations, his paternal instincts. Should misfortunes ensue, they would not, at all events, now be upon her head; she would be proved to have been in the right—that was all.

Upon the morrow the King accepted the will, and the young Duc d'Anjou, a lad of seventeen, was proclaimed Philip V. of Spain. Yet, even in accepting the will of Charles II., Louis at once broke its terms, for he caused to be publicly registered in the Parliament clauses which reserved to the young King of Spain *the right of succession to the crown of France.* At the same time, he reserved for Spain a future which would make of that Empire but a province of France. Not only did he stipulate with his young grandson for the future cession to France, as a war indemnity, of the Low Countries, but he also obtained from him an order to all Spanish governors to obey France, in whatever she should order.

In this way was the decision arrived at which was to have such momentous, such awful results. A good and explicit relation of all the circumstances leading up to that decision will be found in the papers collected by M. Mignet, which are quoted by M. Moret.

The next act in the domestic drama, in so far as it affects the French Royal family, is to be seen in Spain. Here the young King had proceeded, taking with him

his old nurse and the nurse's young daughter, whom he had made his mistress. The girl's father was also present for awhile in the Spanish Court, where, presuming upon his position of quasi father-in-law to the King and of leading officer in the Royal household, he soon contrived to get himself soundly trounced by some Spanish *hidalgos* whom he had insulted.

Louville, who accompanied Philip into Spain, and who was the friend of his boyhood, is the historian who has left on record full details of the King's subsequent career, and—as will be soon seen—it was not, owing in great measure to his own weakness, by any means a bed of roses upon which he was fated to lie.

It was not for long that Philip was to be allowed to enjoy the semi-connubial bliss with which he had entered upon the duties of the monarchy. For, owing to the devices of the young lady who had indirectly put him upon the throne, he was soon to be more married, while being less so, since this vigorous, athletic young man was to be united to a mere child—one in no sense a woman.

The *rusé* Duke of Savoy, in Turin, and his *rusée* young daughter the Duchesse de Bourgogne, had not been long in bringing about the success of the plot originating with the latter. By her merry tricks, *risqués* jests, and tom-fooleries—which shocked Madame de Maintenon but amused the King; by her cajoleries, her jumpings upon his Royal knee and pulling his Royal chin, the lively young Duchesse brought her husband's grandfather to obey her will. In a moment of weakness she over-persuaded the King—induced Louis to consent to a marriage between her sister Marie Louise and her brother-in-law the King of Spain.

When Philip—that virile young man, fond of hunting and field-sports—was first called upon to meet his young bride, at Figuières, at the end of 1701, he was inexpressibly shocked. A religious youth, he had put away his mistress upon his marriage, and to his dismay he found himself confronted by a child who, by her size, ought still to have been in the nursery. The idea of calling that child a wife was simply

MARIE LOUISE ÉLIZABETH D'ORLÉANS,
Duchesse de Berry.

preposterous; nevertheless, as such he had to take her. She was pretty, at all events, and would grow. If small in size, Philip found, from the very first meeting, that there were no restrictions to the length of his little bride's tongue.

Marie Louise had been well coached before leaving Turin by her father; moreover, it has been said of both the daughters of Victor Amadeus II. that they knew everything from the moment of their birth! In a torrent of eloquence, like an old politician, she greeted her husband and sought to make conditions with him. Philip, brought up to obey in the Court of Versailles, was timid by nature; he felt himself dominated by the flowing periods of this most emphatic little doll. With virulence she attacked the young man, insisting, rather than demanding, that in all matters political he was to submit himself wholly for guidance to the wily Savoyard her father.

In spite of the terror with which the lively little imp inspired him, Philip had, however, still more fear and respect for his grandfather Louis XIV. Greatly to the disappointment of the young politician, he refused to promise his child-wife anything.

Father Daubenton, the young Queen's confessor, and Louville have said that, during the two years which elapsed before Marie Louise showed signs of developing into womanhood, the young man gave way to black despair. Meanwhile, with her infernal tongue, she never left him alone, while he, a good-natured dolt, gave way to all her childish caprices and insolences. Before long, it came to be a question, at the Court of France, whether a divorce should not be obtained of this marriage, which was no marriage. Père la Chaise and Godet-Desmarais, Bishop of Chartres, Madame de Maintenon's favourite, were called upon to decide the matter. Louville, however, tells us that, rather than run the risk of displeasing the Duchesse de Bourgogne—saying, that time would remedy the evil—they confirmed the marriage.

Philip's father-in-law, in the meantime, does not appear

to have understood his piety and honesty of purpose. Convinced that the King of Spain would, during his wife's girlhood, come under other, and probably hostile, feminine influences, the wily Savoyard already, in January, 1702, had entered into a secret treaty with his kinsman Prince Eugène against France and Spain. His treachery being feared at Versailles, Louis, while paying the Duke of Savoy largely, was careful to avoid giving to Victor Amadeus the command of the French troops in Italy, which he ardently solicited. This was the more easy since, it being decided that Philip V. was himself to have command of the army in Italy, Spanish etiquette would have prevented the Duke from having anything but a footstool in his son-in-law's presence—whereas he demanded an armchair.

While Philip, with the Duc de Vendôme, his cousin, with sixty thousand Frenchmen and only two thousand Spaniards, passed into Italy, Marie Louise was left in Spain, in the charge of the Princesse des Ursins. In Italy Vendôme's army twice defeated Eugène.

Of Madame des Ursins it has been said that she was the worst woman in Europe! A Frenchwoman who had been for long in Rome, she had been celebrated as the mistress of several of the Cardinals, besides being mixed up in all kinds of disgraceful affairs. When she came to the Spanish Court—where she became practically Queen—she brought with her her latest lover, who became virtually King of Spain. This was a certain d'Aubigny; and, in her deference for Spanish customs, Madame des Ursins soon transformed him into the Señor Don Luis. In the mornings, in the Royal apartments of the Infantas of Spain, next to the Queen's, the Señor Don Luis was to be seen making his toilette at the windows of the no longer juvenile Princesse. Although he made her furious with jealousy, owing to his attentions to the little wife of a French dancing-master, Madame des Ursins, through the girl-Queen, confirmed d'Aubigny in his power, so that soon he had at his disposal—for cash—all the places of importance in Spain.

Such was the state of affairs when Marie Louise, upon the pretext that a small body of the English were in Spain, contrived, by her frantic epistles and wailings at his absence, to obtain Philip's return. This was an act of treachery to her husband, worked in her father's interests; for Philip's presence in Italy was not without considerable weight. Not long after his return, Savoy openly joined with England and Austria.

In the meantime, in Paris, Madame la Duchesse was obtaining more and more power, while going about followed by a troop of followers like a pack of hounds behind her. Of these, one, M. de Nangis, was her favoured lover—a modest young man who did not parade his honours openly. The Abbé de Polignac and M. de Maulévrier were, however, more compromising, especially the latter, since he openly insulted and sought a quarrel with Nangis. Owing to several imprudent letters which the young Duchesse then sent to Maulévrier, through a nurse, Madame de Maintenon, who had a passion for getting hold of compromising letters, soon had a considerably better hold over Marie Adélaïde, after which they worked better together. Maulévrier was sent to Spain, where his brother-in-law the Comte de Tessé was present with an army. Here, after a time, falling as passionately in love in Madrid with Marie Louise as previously he had with her sister, and being successful in neither instance, he determined to commit suicide. On Good Friday the young man jumped out of the palace window and broke his neck. In Paris Madame la Duchesse wept, which the King hearing about, he was much displeased.

Upon his return to Madrid, at the end of 1702, Philip fell violently in love with his wife, now in her fifteenth year. She, however, was haughty and repellent, and, according to the Jesuit Daubenton, "treated him like a nigger." The wicked Madame des Ursins had in vain presented to her a handsome nephew of the Duke of Savoy; the little Queen had as yet no room for coquetry in her head. She only thought and talked of affairs—and money—to her good-

looking cousin, treating him as a mere political agent. Utterly devoid of modesty, either in her conversation or her manners, she sometimes astounded the occupants of the palace. Being displeased one day with the French Ambassador, and hearing, through a door, Louville speaking in his favour, the Queen, in petticoat and low-cut chemise, rushed out to abuse Louville, while Madame des Ursins, running after her, vainly attempted to cover the angry girl's shoulders.

Before long she reduced her weak husband to a condition little better than slavery. He was allowed neither to hunt, walk, nor play cards, while the only woman he was permitted to see was the Princesse des Ursins. She it was who tucked the King into bed at night with his little Queen, carrying away his sword with the lamp ; she again who called him in the morning. In a letter to Madame de Maintenon, Madame des Ursins laughingly complains of her excess of bed-chamber duties, but, in reality, she was very glad to fulfil them, since by their means she alone had the Royal ear.

The violence of Marie Louise reached its climax when, in the absence of Ursins at the Court of Louis XIV., a quarrel broke out—in bed—between the Royal couple as to who was to replace her. While Marie Louise wanted a Piedmontese, Philip wished for a French lady. Hereupon his wife attacked him with her fists, drove him out of bed, and left him shivering in an armchair until the morning! He wept to Louville, when he contrived to see him, disgusted with himself that he had fallen so low at this little lady's hands, but explaining that he saw no remedy against her violence.

To make things worse, during the fifteen years of their combined reign, the Queen and the Princesse insisted upon his attending the *autos-da-fé*, horrible spectacles which he abhorred. Philp V. reigned for forty-six years, and, as his second Italian wife appreciated the horrors of the Inquisition as much as the first had done, he, during that time, was present at seven hundred and eighty-two *autos-*

da-fé. In these he saw twelve thousand persons tortured or flogged, and between fifteen and sixteen hundred human beings burned alive! One feels inclined to wish that a French King who, in the eighteenth century, could permit such untold horrors, had himself been one of the victims.

We have said that, at Versailles, a better understanding prevailed before long between the prudish Maintenon and the unbridled young Princesse, for each was necessary to the other. While Maintenon held some of the letters of the Duchesse de Bourgogne, the latter had the ear of the King. Her vulgarities—so gross, so unheard-of—permitted by the senile monarch, amused him and made him laugh, when everything else that took place but gave him cause for distress and tears. They were imitated by the whole Court; indeed, the most repulsive of her customs—for which the reader is referred to the pages of Saint-Simon—became the *mode*, and may be seen represented in the *Collection des Modes* of that day.

Thus Madame de Maintenon had to go with the times; it was in vain that she established another young lady, named Jeannette Pincré, at the Court as *amuseuse* to Louis, for the Duchesse always out-did her rival.

The spies that Maintenon placed about Marie Adélaïde—Mesdames du Chastelet and de Nogaret, as ladies of honour—her two nieces, Mesdemoiselles de Mailly and de Noailles, and, later, the cunning Lorraine Princesse, Madame d'Espinoy, who ruled the Dauphin—were all won over to the interests of the young Duchesse. That did not, however, prevent them talking and repeating her frivolities to Madame de Maintenon. In some of these she was encouraged by her father-in-law the Dauphin, who remained a boy, full of schoolboy tricks, at fifty; whereas his pious young son, the Duc de Bourgogne, was an old man, combined with a child, at twenty.

At Marly, where there were twelve palaces surrounding the central pavilion of the King, the Dauphin took the young Duchesse out with him upon nocturnal adventures

entirely against *les convenances*. One of these consisted of, in winter time, visiting the friend of Maintenon, the Princesse d'Harcourt, in her bedroom, when they filled the unfortunate woman's bed with snow and half killed her with cold. Such were the manners of the Court in the days of Madame la Duchesse, and she was not always accompanied by her father-in-law upon her midnight pranks.

We have already mentioned the manner in which, during the War of the Spanish Succession, the Councils of the King became known to Prince Eugène almost as though he were at Versailles. This was partly through the agency of this very Princesse d'Espinoy, Maintenon's spy upon the Duchesse, partly through the Duchesse herself, who communicated with her father in the enemy's camp. D'Espinoy was the niece of General Vaudemont, of the Guise and Lorraine family, two of whose sons were with Eugène. Her sister was married to the Chevalier de Lorraine, to whom Madame d'Espinoy passed on Madame de Maintenon's secrets. Since the Duc de Villeroi told the King's secrets also to Vaudemont and the Chevalier, who passed them on to the enemy, nothing remained unknown. Prince Eugène always knew the plans of Versailles in time to frustrate them.

Such were the leading incidents at Court in connection with the Spanish Succession.

CHAPTER XXXVI

Vendôme and Villars, Blenheim and Malplaquet

1702—1712

NEVER did man forge a heavier chain to wear around his own neck than Louis XIV. when he accepted the Spanish Succession. France had been pretty low in 1691, before the death of Louvois, when, with her three hundred fortresses in ruins, she seemed lying an easy prey to the enemy.

Then, however, the last effort of genius of the violent War Minister, in arranging the surprise of a winter attack upon Mons, had brought back to Louis the triumphs of his young days, made him appear once more a giant in the eyes of Europe.

While William was at The Hague, begging and imploring the interminable council of German Princes to hurry up—to give him the two hundred thousand men they had promised—Louvois was already in the field.

With the King, with Vauban, with all the Princes and a hundred thousand men, he fell upon Mons like a thunderbolt upon March 21st, opened fire—with seventy cannon and eighty-four bomb-throwing mortars—upon the 26th. By April 8th the little town had been crushed, destroyed by the flames; while on the 12th Louis marched back again, radiant with glory, to Versailles.

It was a victory which cost Louvois dearly. Madame de Maintenon hated him bitterly for taking the King off without her, while the King detested his Minister for

telling the truth and saying that the success would never have been managed without him. It was in order to get up his credit again that, after this, Louvois commenced the negotiations with the Capitaine Grandval for the assassination of William. Then, although, at the instance of the Court of Saint-Germain, both the King and Madame de Maintenon entered into the plot, they only hated Louvois all the more for contriving to associate them with such a disgraceful and unkingly affair. After the Minister's death, as the result of an ebullition of the King's pent-up rage, Louis, who had often reproached Louvois for his cruelty, only made the war more cruel. Especially, he gave orders for the military execution of his brother's brother-in-law, the Elector Palatine, and of his relations of Savoy.

In 1674 Turenne had ravaged and burned the Palatinate; in 1689 Duras had, in addition, blown up the towns of the Palatinate with gunpowder; and in 1693 the Maréchal de Lorges, with his cruel lieutenant the executioner Mélac, wreaked the King's fury upon Heidelberg, with circumstances of the most heart-rending pitilessness, the most barbarous ferocity. So great were the sufferings of the miserable inhabitants of the Elector Palatine's capital, that—to their credit be it said—many of the French officers, out of their own pockets, gave assistance to the miserable people whom they had rendered homeless, at the King's behest.

At the same time Catinat, setting out to wreak his master's fury upon Savoy and Piedmont, assured the King that he would be careful to execute with *passion et ressentiment* the orders he had received. How he carried them out we know.

Not five years had elapsed from the time of Louis' humiliation at the Peace of Ryswick, ere—in the War of the Spanish Succession—he was to suffer many more humiliations at the hands of an outraged and revengeful Europe. While his principal opponents in this war were the able and bloody Marlborough, who made of the trade of war

but an excuse for money-grubbing, and the literary and artistic Eugène—who, in the greatest combats, pointed out to his officers the picturesque and fantastic effects of the butchery that surrounded them—what leaders had Louis with whom to battle against these giants? Catinat, Boufflers, and Villeroi were still to the fore, although it was not very long before the neglect which the first of these experienced resulted in his resignation of his command. The next—whom we find, like Villeroi, the admiration of the Court—is the Duc de la Feuillade, who married the daughter of Madame de Maintenon's tame minister Chamillart, and ever after kept his father-in-law too much in fear of himself to dare to insist too firmly upon his obeying the orders of Versailles. Prince Eugène, who was to beat him at Turin, could not, if he had been asked, have wished for a more incapable antagonist.

A great favourite with the ladies, Feuillade shone by his coxcombry and impertinence; his vanity was so great that when in 1706 he was offered by Vauban his assistance in reducing Turin, he rejected with scorn the assistance of that able engineer. When menaced by Eugène and the Duke of Savoy, he made three disastrous assaults, and then, refusing to listen to the excellent and warlike advice of the young Duc d'Orléans, he allowed himself to be attacked in his lines, with the result that he spiked all his guns and abandoned Italy in the greatest disorder. With reference to these operations before Turin, the usually well-informed Duclos distinctly states that the Duchesse de Bourgogne acted traitorously, sending to her father accurate information which proved fatal. To Marsin also, who met his end in this action, the Duchesse and Madame de Maintenon, who was opposed to the Duc d'Orléans, are supposed to have given instructions to impart such counsels as would be least likely to be dangerous to the Duke of Savoy. Whether or no—La Feuillade plainly showed his incompetency, and history is unable to reckon him, in consequence, among the Generals who were of any account.

Marsin and Tallard we must consider together, in

connection with their defeat at Blenheim by Marlborough and Eugène upon August 13th, 1704.

The Maréchal de Tallard was a man with a gracious, refined nature, and by no means without capacity. The modesty of his character was singularly at variance with the vaunting boastfulness of a Villeroi or a Feuillade. The misfortune of the Maréchal was that he was excessively short-sighted; it was said of him that he knocked himself up against everything like a cockchafer.

M. de Marsin, also a Maréchal, was a man of the world, light and frothy in society. This did not prevent him from being one of the devout clique. He was the friend of Fénelon and of the Duc de Beauvilliers—that is to say, of the faction who brought the Jesuits back into the King's favour and gave him, as his confessor and spiritual director, the rabid, savage priest Tellier.

While Tallard, in 1704, was on the Rhine, Marsin was with the Elector in Bavaria; this Bavarian Prince being the sole ally of France against the Englishmen, Dutchmen, Hanoverians, Danes, Wurtembergers, and Austrians in the opposing forces.

The prudence of Madame de Maintenon and Chamillart, who feared the invasion of France, forbade either of these commanders to move, when they might have respectively crushed Marlborough—with an army of only fifteen thousand men upon his march through Germany—and Prince Eugène, than whom Marsin was much stronger in Bavaria. While Marlborough and Eugène were making a junction, the French Maréchals, by direct orders from Versailles, were compelled to write for their instructions to Chamillart, who was over a hundred leagues away. The deliberations of an old lady who very slowly made up her mind were fatal to the two French commanders. By the time that they were permitted to effect a junction, Marlborough's dispositions were ready.

It was now that this great soldier's manœuvres brought on a combat, when it would have been greatly to the advantage of the French to have declined one and left

the armies of the allies to be compelled to separate, for want of food, in the wasted country. With the Prince of Baden, Marlborough had stormed the heights of Donauwerth, penetrated into the heart of Bavaria, and—as he intended—rendered the Elector furious, by the manner in which he devastated his territories.

Thirsting for revenge, the Elector of Bavaria insisted upon a battle; when Tallard and Marsin listened to his request and established themselves at Hochstadt, where the Maréchal Villars had won a brilliant victory in the preceding year. Their dispositions, however, were bad, for they separated their armies by some distance, and—while Tallard established the whole of his infantry in the village of Blenheim, where it was useless—they vainly imagined their front to be protected by a swamp and a little stream.

When, to the astonishment of the French, Marlborough attacked in combination with Eugène, when, moreover, with his troops he forded the stream, the Maréchal Tallard was not at his post, but with the Elector and Marsin in the other camp. He galloped towards Blenheim to disengage his infantry from the village. His son had just been killed. Heedless, in his short-sightedness, the Maréchal galloped right among the enemy, and was taken. The officer left in command at Blenheim escaped and drowned himself. The village was surrounded, and twelve squadrons of cavalry and twenty-seven battalions of veteran troops, with all the guns, fell into the hands of the allies. Marlborough, with eight thousand horse, in the meantime, penetrated the weak spot in the centre, drove back the French cavalry, which held it, in two brilliant charges, and hemmed in all the French troops outside the village of Blenheim, upon the banks of the Danube.

Meanwhile, Marsin with his army on the left had been opposed to Eugène, who commanded the right of the allies. He made a magnificent resistance, but was eventually driven backwards upon Hochstadt; when he drew off the Bavarian army and such as remained of the French.

Twelve thousand were slain, and fourteen thousand of

the defeated army were taken alive. Nevertheless, for the whole of the autumn and winter Marsin, with the Elector, contrived to remain in Bavaria.

Eventually, owing to the miserable condition of the few remaining troops, a council of war decided that it was wiser to abandon Germany. Marsin, with only five thousand men, at length succeeded in regaining the left bank of the Rhine.

Thus, by the foolish orders sent in the first instance from Versailles, and afterwards by the want of judgment of his Generals, had Louis already commenced to feel the fetters of the chain which he had forged around his own neck. By Blenheim he not only lost all Germany, but the military reputation of France was lost also; and, to make things worse, about the same time in Spain, Gibraltar,* Barcelona, and Valencia fell into the hands of the English; the two latter towns having declared for the Archduke Charles, under the title of Charles III. of Spain.

Any reference to the military affairs of the later years of Louis XIV. which did not make mention of the Duc de

* Note.—Admiral Sir George Rooke and Sir Cloudesley Shovel entered the Bay of Gibraltar with an Anglo-Dutch fleet of sixty vessels on July 17th, 1704, and at once threw eighteen hundred marines, under the Prince of Hesse-Darmstadt, on to the Isthmus to isolate the Spanish garrison. The Governor vowing he would never surrender, a fearful bombardment took place from the ships on July 23rd, when the Spaniards were driven from the South Mole batteries. Captains Whitaker, Hicks, and Jumper, with some seamen, landing to seize this position, lost two officers and forty men killed, and sixty wounded, by the explosion of a mine. Notwithstanding this frightful loss, the remainder gallantly stormed a redoubt—the total loss being sixty killed and two hundred and twenty-five wounded. When this redoubt was occupied, the Spanish Governor yielded, upon the summons of Sir George Rooke. Both the Spaniards and the French have made several ineffectual attempts to recover The Rock, notably between 1780 and 1782. Notwithstanding that the garrison was once besieged for six months, the flag of Great Britain, hoisted in 1704, has floated triumphantly over Gibraltar for two hundred years already.

Vendôme and the Maréchal Duc de Villars would be incomplete. These two Generals may be considered as having been the heroic buffoons of the French army. The Duc de Saint-Simon, doubtless from envy, persists in viewing them only from their worst side; treating them as bad actors, miserable comedians. It was, nevertheless, by their often foolish audacity, their sometimes ridiculous airs of bravado, their lies, their boastings, and their *bonhomie*, that they oft-times lifted up and sustained the *morale* of the armies. When there was no pay, and rations were conspicuous only by their absence, then did the burlesque side of these two heroes chiefly assert itself. With a laugh—with a jest, with a gay, lighted-hearted song—they made the soldiers, no matter how miserable, laugh and cheerful also, inspired by their Generals' hilarity.

In a winter on the Rhine, when, without boots or coats, masses of unhappy soldiers entered Germany, to find, in their despair, nothing but a devastated country before them, there was one General always ready to save them from that despair, to share a glass of *eau-de-vie* with a soldier, while whistling to him an air from the latest opera. This was Villars; and the men followed him gaily wherever he chose to lead them.

It was the same thing in Italy. When, after having crossed the snows of the Alps, the wretched French soldier at length found himself in Lombardy with the joyous army of Vendôme,* all sorrow was forgotten. And this, although there was no order, no hospitals, and, as Louville says, "men died like flies." Nowhere was one more happy. The Duc de Vendôme, the descendant of Henri IV. and Gabrielle d'Estrées, was the General of all licence—he

* Note.—Louis Joseph, Duc de Vendôme, was born in Paris on July 1st, 1654, and was known as Duc de Penthièvre until his father's death. He was the eldest son of Louis, Duc de Vendôme, and Laura Mancini. Louis was the son of César, Duc de Vendôme, and Mademoiselle de Mercœur. César was the son of Henri IV. and Gabrielle. Louis Joseph died June 11th, 1712, after a month of excessive gluttony at Tinaroz, in Valencia.

permitted everything. Himself a satyr, with all the habits of a Turk, a bacchanalian feaster, more often at the table or in bed than at the head of his troops on horseback, he had, nevertheless, the most daring courage. In spite of the wanton disorder of his camp, Vendôme carried with him a singular force; moreover, he usually managed to wake up in time to head some daring feat of arms—to upset entirely the plans of Eugène, who had, with every reason, expected to catch him napping after some drunken orgie. Then the white plumes—which he wore in imitation of his great-grandfather, Henri de Navarre—would be seen waving gallantly in the breeze, while beneath it the great fat body of "Cupidon," as the Spaniards called him, came plunging fearlessly into the ranks of the Imperial intruders.

Strange to say, the devotion of the army to a leader who usually left his followers to think for themselves and command for themselves was unbounded. The inferior officers became Generals at a pinch, and fought with heroic fury for their bacchanalian leader—for his sake, allowed themselves to be cut to pieces. Moreover, the followers of Vendôme prided themselves upon being members of his army of Italy; they looked down upon the army of the North with the utmost contempt.

The marvel is that, with the debilitated constitution, the flabby habit of body, resulting from his excesses, the Duc de Vendôme was still, at fifty-six, not only able to continue them but to continue in the field. He did so, however, and every man in his army imitated the leader. It was the army of orgie; woe indeed to the women in the towns and villages through which it passed!

A very differently built man was the Maréchal de Villars.* He was tall and brown, nervous, always in movement, and rejoiced in a splendid constitution which never

* Note.—Louis Hector, Duc de Villars, was born at Moulins, May 8th, 1653. He represented France in Vienna in 1701, and died at Turin, June 17th, 1734. His death, at this advanced age, is said to have been chiefly caused by his discontent with his ally the King of Sardinia (formerly Duke of Savoy).

From a contemporary engraving.

CLAUDE LOUIS HECTOR, DUC DE VILLARS,
Maréchal de France.

failed. His father had been the handsomest man in France and famous for his duels, in which he often fought as second, to oblige a friend. For in that day, when the seconds fought too, his ready and skilful sword was much sought after. His nickname was Orondate—he was a regular hero of romance.

His son the Maréchal was musical to a degree, and, while he retained the airs of the operas in his head, the actresses who sang them were more often than not to be found beneath his roof. His life—which lasted for over fourscore years—was one long comedy of fighting, boasting, love-making, singing. But while playing the hero, Villars was a hero. Even Saint-Simon has to admit that "his projects were bold and vast, and nearly always good."

It was as a cavalry officer that Villars was first famous, and he was forty-nine before he ever commanded an army. One of his most famous feats was in the autumn of 1702, when he passed the Rhine in the presence of a redoubtable German leader, the Prince of Baden. This he did opposite Huninguen, under the fire of the strong fort of Friedlingen. Most of his infantry consisted of recruits, while he was considerably inferior in cavalry to the enemy. The German infantry were admirably posted upon a hill, and the odds were distinctly against the French. Villars, heading his young infantry, led them in a splendid charge with the bayonet. They carried the hill, driving the enemy headlong before them. His cavalry also conquered the superior masses of the enemy's horse, which the Prince of Baden had injudiciously placed so as to screen his artillery and prevent the service of his guns. The battle was won more by luck and dash than by good management—it was the fight which made of Villars a Maréchal de France. The men of his army loudly proclaimed him by that title upon the field of battle, and the King confirmed the rank as soon as he heard of the bravery of the General and the brilliancy of his success.

In 1703 Villars had another splendid success, upon the

Rhine at Kehl, after which, receiving an explicit order from the King to save Bavaria, he instantly marched off through the perilous defiles of the Black Forest, and passed, in eleven days, from the head-waters of the Rhine to the head-waters of the Danube. At Willengen the Elector of Bavaria was met and threw himself into the arms of Villars.

The advice of the latter then was to march straight upon Vienna, and had it been followed, success would have been certain, for Hungary was—although Villars knew it not—just upon the point of rising under Ragotzi. Thus the Austrian Empire would, between the two, have been crushed, annihilated. At all events, Italy would have been saved to France and Spain.

Unfortunately for Villars, the Elector of Bavaria ruined their combined chances by dragging the Maréchal into the Tyrol. There, while the Bavarian and Villars were delayed in the German Tyrol, the Italian Tyrol presented endless obstacles to Vendôme, who was attacking it from the other side. Especially did the treachery of the, Duke of Savoy—who just at that time changed sides—spoil the business, for, to the great misfortune of the French arms, Vendôme was compelled to hurry back again into Lombardy. At that very time the Emperor, driven to bay by the Hungarians, was reduced to buying the assistance of the Danes.

It was after this that Villars, left in face of two armies and almost without powder, won a magnificent battle on the ground where Blenheim was to be fought a year later. At Hochstadt, on September 21st, 1703, he fought a long, bloody, and determined battle, in which he killed eight thousand men and took four thousand prisoners.

Vendôme, meanwhile, was having considerable trouble with the Savoyards, of whom he had a number in his own army. These he had great difficulty in disarming; but, when he had done so, he carried on the war in Savoyard territory, in Piedmont, between intervals of idleness and gaining slight successes. For his treacherous conduct to France and Spain, in declaring war against his own two

daughters, Victor Amadeus was rewarded at the Peace of Utrecht by being made into a King. He was given the crown of Sicily.

There was, however, a time, some years before the peace, when the fortunes of this unstable Prince were at a very low ebb.*

In Italy, in 1705, we see an example of the wakefulness, even in sleep, of the Duc de Vendôme. Surprised by Prince Eugène at Cassano, the jolly good fellow of the troops —the puffy Cupidon—surprised that Imperial leader in turn. By the vigour of his resistance, Vendôme not only killed a very large percentage of the Prince's army, but compelled Eugène to retreat. Save for timely help from Austria, he would have been forced to seek for safety in the mountains of the Tyrol.

The Savoyard Duke, in the meantime, abandoned and left alone, seemed lost. He had lost everything except Turin. Here, unfortunately—owing to his sleepiness in sitting down for six months before a little town which covered Turin—Vendôme left him unmolested to muse upon his changing fortunes. At the same time, upon the Rhine, Villars was to be observed in an admirable position, in a camp which he had strongly fortified, while expecting the arrival of Marlborough to invade France. The only thing which then prevented the invasion was the dissension between the allies, who did not keep their engagements with the English commander. The Dutch, instead of advancing with Marlborough to give Louis the lesson which he well merited upon French soil, insisted upon returning to the Low Countries.

The Duke of Marlborough once admitted that "the French did not fight badly when they were well led." Unfortunately for France, this was not often the case; usually it was the courage, the heroic devotion of the rank

* Note.—The Duke of Savoy lost Sicily in 1718, when it went to the Emperor. He was, however, then given Sardinia instead, and called the King of Sardinia. From the House of Savoy is descended the present ruling line in Italy.

and file which—more than the skill of their commanders—militated to the gain of any success.

The Battle of Malplaquet, which occurred in 1709, is an example of this kind. Claimed as a victory by the allies, it was more than a moral victory for France, since in it the French killed three men for every man they lost themselves. Yet the soldiers can scarcely have been said to have been well led by their two brave commanders, the opera-loving Villars and the dogged, honest old Boufflers. For the former received a shot early in the battle which broke his knee, when he was carried to the rear in a state of unconsciousness; while the latter made a mistake in generalship, in neglecting to call his right to his assistance, at a moment when to have done so would have altered the fortunes of the day.

France was terribly low by the time of the Battle of Malplaquet; already were three invading forces—of Germans, Austrians, and Savoyards respectively—giving each other rendezvous at Lyons. It is true that the Frenchmen, at bay, hurled the Germans back into the Rhine, and thus the little family meeting in Lyons was frustrated; but it was the courage of despair which nerved the emaciated arms of the starving defenders of their country. And such, too, was the case at Malplaquet.

In vain—by negotiations carried out by the Minister Torcy, by Rouillé de Marbeuf and Helvetius, the quack doctor of the Duc de Beauvilliers, with Heinsius, the ruler of Holland—was Louis begging, imploring for peace, offering most humiliating terms of surrender. The King's messengers were but trifled with.

Although the kind-hearted Queen Anne, horror-stricken at the oceans of blood which had already drenched the plains of Europe, was ardently longing for peace, the greedy John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, who ruled the Queen through his violent wife, was determined upon the continuance of the war, since the death of thousands of his fellow-beings gave him the means of chinking more gold into his already well-filled pockets.

Nor did Eugène show any grandeur of soul. Like cats playing with a wounded mouse, the two great leaders ferociously tortured their prey. Mockingly, in reply to the request of another kingdom for Philip V.—instead of Spain, which he was to abandon—they replied, "Give him a kingdom by all means; make one for him out of your own dominions; let your grandson be made the King of Franche Comté, which province you yourself stole from Spain." But as for giving the young Philip the two Sicilies; they would not hear of it—while insisting that Louis himself was to hunt his grandson out of Spain.

The greatest butchery of the whole war of the Spanish Succession took place at Malplaquet. Although against the ninety thousand men of Viliars, a large proportion being recruits, Marlborough and Eugène had no less than one hundred and thirty thousand, they strove by treachery to assist that which they proposed to do by force. During the two days before the battle—while the Dutch were hesitating to attack—Marlborough sent English and Dutch spies into the French camp, who deceived the starving Frenchmen by talking about peace, while in reality they were noting the weak points in the defences, taking notes of the conformation of the lines. They were well received, these well-fed foreigners, by the living skeletons they came to deceive.

When Marlborough's lieutenant, Cadogan, talking to the Italian General Albergotti, spoke loudly about peace—regretting that Villars was not at hand to discuss the matter—the word "peace" was caught up by the bystanders, shouted round the camp! Joyfully the soldiers embraced the English and Dutch emissaries who had uttered that cheering word, until Villars himself put an end to their presence by causing some shots to be fired in the air.

Having observed that the centre was the weakest part, and that, by making a strong demonstration against the right, Villars would, to support it, still more have to weaken the centre, this was the line the allies pursued; they attacked the right with fury.

Villars, passing along his lines, found his deceived soldiers

white with bitter anger. They had cast what little food they had upon the ground at their feet, vowing that they would not eat until they had taken their revenge upon those whom they, in their blindness, had embraced as brothers. All they now desired was blood, for meat and drink alike!

They soon had plenty and to spare of that of the German mercenaries of Holland, who, led by real Dutchmen—one a prince, the nephew of William III.—made the most gallant attacks upon the French left. When Villars had advanced from Mons, where he had left his innumerable sick, he had formed field entrenchments at Malplaquet, protected by *abattis*, which are trees felled with the boughs, which are sharpened into points, left sticking out in the direction of the enemy. Right up to these *abattis* came the masses of the Dutch mercenaries before a shot was fired. And then, all at once, a discharge of every musket, every gun loaded with grape-shot, mowed them down by the thousand. Such as gallantly struggled on, clambering through the boughs or over the entrenchments, were savagely bayoneted. Three times in succession did the brave Orange leaders bring them up to the attack, until, by the end of the third attempt to storm the lines, there was a heap of twelve thousand dead lying in front of the French left wing.

The weight of the English masses hurled upon the French right had a better effect. Seeing his men weakening, Villars, taking his men from the centre, charged at their head. It was in this gallant and ferocious onslaught that his knee was broken by a shot. Boufflers had been in command on the victorious left; he now threw himself upon Eugène, who—with thirty thousand men whom he had in reserve—was charging through the weakened centre. Taking all the available French cavalry, Boufflers charged. He charged home, and charged and charged again, upon the thirty thousand of Eugène.

It was a noble combat, and Eugène's forces, weakened—wavered. Then would have been the moment for Boufflers to have taken the right, as yet not broken through by the

English, and to have hurled them upon Eugène. He missed his opportunity, and, on the contrary, gave time to Marlborough to establish some batteries, by which the French cavalry was taken between two fires. This it was which decided the day. Boufflers was forced to determine upon a retreat, which he carried out calmly and deliberately with one-half of the army, while the other half followed him slowly, repulsing completely any attempt at pursuit.

Thus was fought the Battle of Malplaquet. In the awful carnage of that day, while the allies, the nominal victors, lost the terrible number of twenty thousand killed, the defeated French claim only to have had seven thousand put *hors de combat*. Nor, since they fought in a great measure behind entrenchments, although the allies rated their enemy's losses at twelve thousand, is there any reason for doubting that the French estimate was the correct one. For, who could ever count the corpses upon that awful field of battle? On either side, it was simply by calling the rolls of the various corps that the number of missing could have been ascertained. It was Boufflers himself, ever honest and accurate, who returned his losses at the smaller figure.

The only immediate result to the allies of this battle was the recapture of Mons, which little town, transformed into one vast hospital, now once more changed hands.

The year 1710 was witness to some rapid changes. At first the English and Austrians were successful, and Philip V. fled from Madrid. But Spain was for him, and Vendôme came to his rescue, when the Archduke, the so-called Charles III., had in turn to fly. In a battle at Villaviciosa, Vendôme at last proved himself to be very wide awake. He first, at Brihuega, forced the English into a small town, and then next day thrashed the Austrians so severely that their cause was for ever lost in Spain. Philip V. remained on the throne, and Europe now saw the question of the Spanish Succession decided.

In the following year Anne and Louis entered into a

secret treaty, through the agency of a certain Ménager, who came covertly to London, where he lodged in the house of a midwife, whence he was taken by Bolingbroke to see the Queen, who greeted him cordially. Despite the loud outcry of the Dutch and Austrians, the secret treaty, signed with Ménager on October 6th, 1711, was everywhere proclaimed. The Elector of Hanover, afterwards George I., also made a violent outcry.

A few months later, while Louis handed over to England Dunkirk as a gauge of peace, Bolingbroke was received in Paris like an angel from heaven. Villars defeated Eugène in a bloody battle at Denain on July 24th, 1712, and the Peace of Utrecht was signed on April 11th, 1713.

CHAPTER XXXVII

The Court in Later Days

1700—1713

WHILE engaged upon these annals, after a day spent in the study of Spanish history in its bearing upon that of France, it happened to the author to dream a dream, of Spain and the horrors of the Spanish Inquisition. Consisting, as it did, of flames, smoke, the smell of burning flesh—black-robed familiars of the Inquisition holding up crucifixes to men and women dying in agony—it was not a pleasant dream which he experienced, as the penalty of having read too much.

There was, however, a proverb—cited by the Grand Inquisitor to King Philip V. as, with his Italian second wife, he looked on at the horrible *auto-da-fé*—which impressed itself upon the dreamer's memory. Although in Spanish—a language he has never learned—when it was translated word by word by the Italian Cardinal Alberoni, it was simple enough. For that arch-plotter, the Queen's favourite Minister, seemed to be standing by her side.

"Between walls and citadel needs a city!" Such was the saying of the Grand Inquisitor.

How applicable are the words of this imaginary Spanish proverb to France throughout the whole of the reign of Louis XIV.! The King was the citadel, the nobles and priesthood formed the walls. The city—composed of the houses of Christianity, humanity, religious tolerance, faith, honour, morality, virtue of men and women, honesty,

kindness, and truth, was practically non-existent throughout the seventy-two long years during which the third of the Bourbon Kings cumbered the throne of France. There lay—on the contrary—upon the space where the city should have been, a horrible desert. Upon this sprouted—luxuriant and rank—the poison plants of lies, death, cruelty, torture, religious intolerance, pride, hate, bloodshed, extortion, hypocrisy, adultery, incest, and all the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plain. The seeds of this evil vegetation were constantly dropping and taking root—to spring up anew during the succeeding Regency and reign of Louis XV.—to culminate at length in the horrors of the French Revolution. Overhead, meanwhile, instead of the bright sun and blue sky, there hung a lurid pall of blood-red cloud, obscured with heavy volumes of rolling smoke. From this, in place of the refreshing dew of heaven, there fell incessantly the tears of the widow and the orphan, while the muttered moans of the wretched prisoner, in the dungeon or on the rack, were but the early presage of the yet far-distant storm which was to sweep away Monarchy, Nobility, and Clergy with the trenchant broom of the guillotine!

While the days of retribution were yet so far off, the condition of the *noblesse* at large continued to be that of the Court, rotten to the core. During the last years of Louis we find that religion, or, to give it its proper name, religious intolerance, was the constant theme of all; the King, the Duc de Bourgogne, the great prelates, the Jesuit casuists, thought of and practised little else. The Papal Bull *Unigenitus* was of more importance than the terrible war which devastated Europe; the only subjects to rival its importance were the false scandals which connected the name of the Duc d'Orléans, the King's nephew, with the poisoning of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne, and the, it is to be feared, true ones which proclaimed the relations existing between him and his eldest daughter, who became the Duchesse de Berry.

The great mass of the nobility had developed into mere

From the picture by H. Rigaud.

LOUIS DE FRANCE,
Duc de Bourgogne.

hangers-on of the King's favour. To obtain a place or a pension, there was no meanness, gambling swindle, or villainy to which its male members would not stoop; while the women threw honour to the winds, or merely treated it as a marketable commodity. The fairest jewel of woman was placed at the disposal of some courtier of high rank as a reward for his interest, or sold to some financier in order that with the proceeds of shame might be purchased the gay apparel required by a lady to keep up her rank and position at Versailles. Often their own husbands sent them to the financiers, who forced them to sign documents wherein they acknowledged their shame.

Already before 1709, the great famine year in France, two earnest reformers had endeavoured to alleviate the general distress of the State and the country by suggesting reforms in the methods of taxation. From 1689, both Boisguillebert and Vauban had been urging equality of taxation—upon the nobles, the great proprietors, and the clergy as well as the lower orders—as the sole means of saving the State from the terrible bankruptcy to which it was rapidly approaching. The *Factum* of Boisguillebert appeared in 1707. His previous book in 1698 had been laughed to scorn; but the second was partly acted upon in the year after the famine, when an innovation was made by taxing the nobles. In the meantime, Vauban was disgraced as a dangerous lunatic, his book was ordered to be publicly burned, and he himself died six weeks later, leaving a ruined France behind him. In those days Desmarets had succeeded Chamillart as principal Minister; the troubles of Chamillart, and his vain efforts to obtain more money, having reduced him to a condition of drivelling idiocy. Desmarets, who was a man of generally bad reputation, proved equal to the task, for the time. Without pity for the poor, he crushed and squeezed money out of them, after all else had failed, by a system which he established of appointing receivers-general.

At length, much against the King's conscience, who considered such measures quite wrong, the nobles and

clergy were taxed by Desmarets to the extent of a tenth of their revenue. The King's scruples were allayed when it was explained to him that the clergy would certainly manage to get out of paying more than a moderate sum; while his own gifts to the nobility would make up to them for the tenth they had to give—that at all events, upon the privileged ones the tax would not fall heavily. Then, too, it was urged that those in credit at Court could be excused by the King; and Louis made many such exemptions. The great body of the nobility had, however, now to submit to the bitter humiliation of having all their affairs, many of which were far too base and dirty to bear the light, overhauled by the clerks of the *bureaux*.

Terrible were the *exposés* which had to be endured by those who, while wincing under the ruthless hands of the unfeeling *commis*, yet struggled and wriggled hard to escape taxation upon too large an amount.

Many of the men were proved to exist upon nothing but gambling, others to be mixed up in shady concerns with money-lenders, all were more or less disgraced; the meanings too of many of the sudden deaths during the epidemic of poisonings were now made plain. The strange understandings between the ladies and the money-lenders, by which the noble dames were enabled to keep up a decent appearance in the Court of the King and Madame de Maintenon, were also in some instances made very evident.

At this time the Procureur-Général of the Jesuits thought it a favourable opportunity to abscond with the money-bags of that order. When, by doing so, the wily priest created the bankruptcy of the creditors of the house, the Gallicans had their revenge for the spiteful laughter of their rivals upon the occasion of Harlay, the Archbishop of Paris, being hooted upon his nocturnal amorous adventures.

The priesthood, especially its higher ranks, contained some very young members in the later days of Louis XIV. We have already mentioned the case of a Bishop of only fifteen who was seen by Cosnac receiving a flogging

at the hands of his preceptor. The reader of Lémontey * will find from him that, whereas up to 1687 Louis recompensed the military services of laymen by religious benefices and pensions upon Bishops' sees, after that date the King frequently bestowed bishoprics and abbeys upon the quite young boys of great families. As he made himself practically Pope in France in 1682, he was enabled in this matter to reward his hungry courtiers at the expense of the greedy clergy without reference to Rome. The marvel to us is that, with the extravagance in dress of the day, the courtiers, save the greatest nobles and princes, were ever able to make any figure at the Court at all.

The dresses of the ladies, too, were excessively rich, gold embroidery and brocades being very largely used. They were not, however, comfortable, the straight corsets and restricted skirts preventing comfort or ease in movement. It was not until the Regency that the fashion of voluminous skirts, puffed out as by crinolines, came in, being introduced from England, who took the gold-lace fashions in exchange. The young Duchesse de Berry, who was plump and well made, looked particularly well in these swelling loose garments, and, by increasing their size, put very much into the shade her vicious and diminutive rival, the Duchesse du Maine, who was a Princesse of the house of Condé. The austere Jansenists, however, highly objected to this freedom of attire for ladies and preached against the fashion, upon the grounds of immorality. The reason which they gave for their objections would be

* Note.—Lémontey had placed at his disposal, in 1808, the most secret archives, and was then able to examine six hundred different volumes, all of which were carried off from Paris in 1814; he is therefore very reliable. Benoiston de Châteauneuf (in *Annales d'hygiène*, 1846) gives some interesting details of the manner in which the nobles changed their names at will in the Courts of the Bourbon Kings. Thus many old family names are but fictitious—Blanchefort makes himself Créqui, Vignerot transforms himself into Richelieu, Champagne assumes the name of Sully, Crussel becomes Uzès, and Chabot, Rohan, etc.

considered amusing in these days, especially by those who are old enough to remember the crinolines of the sixties. They were, however, sufficiently potent to make it very difficult for a lady of a Jansenist family to appear properly dressed according to the *mode*, these unfortunate dames being compelled to array themselves in a sort of compromise of a hybrid description, which only resulted in their being laughed at by those more in the fashion.

During the reign of Madame de Maintenon, from 1689 to 1713, the hair was worn brushed up high above the forehead and surmounted by a wire scaffolding, two feet in height. Whenever the wearer of this moved her head, it trembled and wobbled. Upon an old lady, like the spouse of the King, this trembling was incessant and ridiculous. The King hated the fashion, but in this matter the word of Maintenon was more potent than the wish of Louis, although the ladies of the Court shared the King's ideas on the subject of the head-dress, since they found it inconvenient in the highest degree. What must they have found the *ques-a-cos* of Marie Antoinette sixty years later, which castle-like edifices were no less than four feet high, as worn by that giddy and unfortunate Queen?

The Peace of Utrecht, at all events, brought relief to the dames and demoiselles of the Court of Louis XIV. After the peace, the Earl of Shrewsbury came to Paris as ambassador. The Countess, whose mother was an Italian, was a very handsome woman. Upon her first appearance at the opera she appeared with her hair neatly and tidily dressed. The next day it was found that she had set the fashion. Every French lady had thrown away her wire castle, and, with the hair flattened down upon the sides of their heads, friends had difficulty at first in recognising each other when they met.

Comfort, as we understand it nowadays, did not exist in other matters besides the dressing of the hair. It may be said to have just commenced after the death of Louis, during the Regency. Then first began the

manufacture of easy-chairs and sofas, comfortable seats for two people or with room to lie down. Before that period, fireplaces were almost non-existent, their want being supplied by screens to keep off the draughts. Thus, owing to the want of comfort, ladies stopped in their beds the greater part of the day and received their guests in their bedrooms, where they were coquettishly dressed in pretty bed-attire.

With the Regency came a change—the ladies began to get up at a reasonable hour and to receive their visitors properly dressed. No doubt the abolition of the uncomfortable mode of wearing the hair during the last years of Louis had already inclined them to a change.

With regard to the utter absence of morality at the Court, it is not to be supposed that the fanatical persecution of the Jansenists which disgraced the last years of Louis caused him to reprobate in others those manners which had been his own until old age with Madame de Maintenon—who was three years his senior—had tamed him. Nor did that lady reject the friendship of men like the scapegrace old Duc de Villeroi *; on the contrary, his *contes galants* were highly appreciated by her and the King. Free-thinking, too, was not suppressed, although some of the *libertins* and *esprits forts* of the day narrowly escaped imprisonment, nominally as Jansenists.

Of the same class as the Duc de Villeroi was the Duc de Richelieu, a young noble who was quite as great a coxcomb, and now coming into prominence, owing to his amours. It was considered—at any rate during the Regency—that a lady had to qualify for favourable reception at Court by gaining the approval of this chartered libertine. To such an extent was this recognised, that during his imprisonment in the Bastille, for his share in a treasonable plot with Spain, the good-natured Regent

* Note.—François de Neuville, Duc de Villeroi and Maréchal de France, was born on April 7th, 1644. Despite the excesses for which he was renowned, he lived to the great age of eighty-six. He died at Paris on July 18th, 1730.

even gave permission for the Duc de Richelieu's many mistresses to attend upon him, to pay their respects daily! They could not offer their condolences upon the rigours of his confinement, since there were none. Mademoiselle Delauney, a young lady of the Maine household, who was shut up at the same time for her share in the affair, said that she had never known what happiness was until she was confined in the Bastille! That, however, was in the days of the Regent, who—throughout his debauched career—was never able to bear malice, even against those who were plotting against his liberty or openly saying that he ought to be killed. His habit was rather to reward his foes—to give them a pension, of a large amount, as he did to young Voltaire.

At the first performance of Voltaire's play *Œdipe*, which, being aimed distinctly at the Regent and his scapegrace young daughter, the Duchesse de Berry, was expected to crush the former, all those present were astonished to see the Regent send for Voltaire and congratulate him upon the cleverness of his piece, of which he had not missed a single equivocal allusion to himself.

Voltaire was then known only as a brilliant young scamp who had been brought up by the Jesuits, a witty rascal who had already been taken rather too seriously by being accorded a year's lodging in the Bastille. He was greatly caressed by the old Maréchal de Villars and his pretty young wife, of whose *beaux yeux* he was enamoured. The Villars were attached to the Maine interest and against Philippe d'Orléans. After acting in the piece of which he was author, Voltaire had taken his seat between the Maréchal and his pretty wife, when all the audience cried out to the latter, "Kiss him!—kiss him!"

It was typical of the Duc d'Orléans that, from sheer good-nature, not from design, he should have called up Voltaire from his seat in the heart of the foe, after first applauding him warmly, and upon the spot have ordered him an annuity equal to eight thousand francs a year of to-day.

His daughter, Marie Louise d'Orléans, the imperious young Duchesse—who became early a widow—was at the time seated, in the Royal state which she arrogated to herself, upon a daïs in the centre of the house. She was surrounded by thirty of her ladies, her gentlemen, and her Guards, of whom the captain, Riom, nephew of the Comte de Lauzun, was her *amant-en-titre*, whom she actually wished to marry. From pure self-will—in the same way as Louis had married Maintenon—did this young Princesse argue that she had a right to take for a second husband one not of her own station. Her grandmother, Madame, the Elector Palatine's sister, was furious at the idea. The child which Marie-Louise d'Orléans bore, however, out of wedlock, a girl, was not imagined to be that of Riom. The whole of Europe openly said that its father was to be found nearer home. The crime of over-close relationship, with or without the marriage tie, was apparently looked upon as but venial either before or after the death of Louis XIV. The relationships of the Mancini with their brother, and of one of them, the Duchesse de Bouillon, with her husband's brother, the Cardinal de Bouillon, were well known. In the Condé family, the Duchesse de Longueville and her two brothers had made themselves equally notorious, while—according to the Memoirs of the Duc de Saint-Simon—the Prince de Montbeliard actually married his son to his daughter, in Paris.

Madame, the mother of Philippe the Regent, and second wife of the brother of Louis XIV., was perhaps the most prolific writer and most observant chronicler of her day ; it is from her that many facts are known which would otherwise be obscure. A virtuous woman herself, this strongminded Bavarian Princess had the misfortune to be united to perhaps the most worthless man of her time, and to suffer as greatly from the constant presence of the Chevalier de Lorraine as had her unfortunate predecessor. She was not, however, afraid of either him or her husband. The only person of whom she appears to have had any fear was Madame de Maintenon—after that

lady had possessed herself of some of the letters of the Palatine Princesse, in which—as usual—she had stated rather too plainly what she knew. Among other facts that she recorded, were that there existed between Madame de Wurtemberg and her son the same unnatural tie as that believed to exist between her own son and her granddaughter.

From these instances it will be seen that we have not spoken any too hardly of the iniquities of the day. It was a time when people did not seem even to possess the perception of what was right or wrong. Moreover, the priests absolved every enormity—no matter how shocking, how horrible—so long as it did not happen to be a difference of opinion upon religious doctrine to that which they held themselves. Then, as has been seen already, in the matter of the Revocation, and as we shall show presently, in the matter of the Bull, there was no mercy, no redemption possible!

Before going further into the character and attributes of the Duc d'Orléans and his eldest daughter, it will be as well to mention the circumstances by which they were brought into the most prominent position in France.

In the year 1711 Louis the Dauphin, who usually enjoyed rude health and boyish spirits, died from the effects of a surfeit of fish. This brought the King's grandson Louis, Duc de Bourgogne, the pupil of Fénelon, into a position of very great prominence; indeed, it may be said that he became half King from that moment.

While his attractive young Savoyard wife was pursuing her giddy course—even so far as to have such a flirtation with her boy-godson the Duc de Richelieu as to make him the fashion later—the religious Duc now devoted himself with his grandfather to the affairs of the kingdom. These, for him, meant nothing but the affairs of religion, the persecution of the Jansenists—the men who dared to say that God had given to all a conscience, a right to salvation existing within themselves by divine grace, without reference to papal permission to be saved.

Of all the savage wild beasts who ever came out of the Jesuit school, none was so hideous, so fierce, rabid, and detestable as Tellier, of the establishment of the Rue Saint Antoine. Very few even of his own order dared to approach him! This man it was, upon the death of Père la Chaise, in 1709, whom the Ducs de Beauvilliers and Chevreuse—at the bidding of Fénelon—selected as the King's confessor.

From that moment the persecution of Quesnel, the head of the Jansenists, of Noailles, the Archbishop of Paris, and of all the other Jansenists, became the first thought, the daily and hourly thought of the King. He was encouraged in his cruel ideas by his religious grandson, and there seems every reason to suppose that the Duc de Bourgogne, when he had become Dauphin, aided and abetted Louis—at the end of 1711—in dictating to the Pope the terms of the infamous Bull. This, only the King's persistence and threats succeeded in inducing him to promulgate a year later.

By this Bull, *Unigenitus*, the godhead of the Pope was practically declared; its terms are almost childish, so absolutely unreasonable—so impossible are they.

Impossible as they were for any sane man to accept, the intellectual and once seemingly tolerant Fénelon was no less bitter and active, in his exile as Prince-Archbishop at Cambrai, in enforcing them upon his enemies than was Louis, to the last day of his life, in Paris. An exile, however, Fénelon remained, for, despite the prayers of Bourgogne, Louis looked upon him as too dangerous to admit of his recall—even although he had accepted the furious Tellier at his hands.

The King had not waited for the Bull to persecute the nuns of Port Royal. No sooner was the ferocious Tellier at the helm than this was effected. No novices being now permitted at this holy establishment, it consisted in 1709 of twenty-two old ladies, some of whom were over eighty years old, and ill. Upon November 5th, d'Argenson, the brutal Lieutenant of Police, came to Port Royal to execute an order, which it was expected by the Jesuits

would astonish the Pope! For the Pope was suspected by them of Jansenist leanings. The poor old nuns were dragged from their beds upon that winter's night, and, with hardly time to take a little provision of bread and wine, were hurried off at once on a journey of a hundred and fifty miles without a break. One of them, eighty-six years old, was dead even before the journey ended.

This coup was followed by the sacrilege of the dead. The church and cemetery of Port Royal contained three thousand coffins of nuns and others. The heart of the saintly Arnaud, the bodies of the celebrated recluses Lemaistre de Sacy and Tillemont, and also that of the great Racine, were interred in the sacred precincts. The greater number of bodies were those of nuns, some quite recently buried. All of these were dug up, exposed to the vulgar gaze, and thrown out into the dung-cart!

The only word that Fénelon had to say regarding this inhuman destruction of living and dead in Port Royal, was that he "feared lest it should excite compassion for *ces filles*!" In the same letter, to Tellier, he attempted to work the ruin of Noailles, who held the post which he had coveted himself, when Madame de Maintenon had caused Noailles, her man, to be appointed.

In the year 1711 we find the Duc de Bourgogne celebrating his accession to the rank of Dauphin by still further persecuting the Protestants, issuing an edict to interdict them from any sort of commerce. At the same time Basville, an Intendant who had formerly been particularly ferocious in the Cévennes, unjustifiably arrested a *Camisard** named Saint-Julien, in Swiss territory, and broke him upon the wheel! Some pacific meetings of Protestants,

* Note.—*Camisard* was the nickname given to the religious insurgents of Calvinistic Faith in the Cévennes, from their habit of wearing a white shirt (*camisarde*) over their clothing by night, in order to distinguish one another. The insurrection had been entirely suppressed long before the arrest of Saint-Julien in Switzerland; but from first to last over a hundred thousand Camisards of both sexes were butchered, often with inconceivable tortures.

From the picture by H. Rigaud.

MARIE ADELAÏDE,
Duchesse de Bourgogne.

or so-called new Catholics, were also, under the new Dauphin, promptly stopped—by the ruthless sabring of all present.

While the young Prince was, in his religious zeal, just warming to the work, his end came—suddenly. In February, 1712, a purple fever carried not only him to his grave, but his wife—the darling of the Court—died also!

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Philippe d'Orléans and the Death of Louis

1713—1715

One of the principal persons about the Court in the later days of Louis XIV. was the Duc de Saint-Simon. A friend of the Jesuits, he was the friend of Fénelon, or, at all events, they were permeated with the same ideas as to the best means of bolstering up the ruined State. It must be admitted that the homœopathic treatment that they proposed was a strange one, since it contemplated the cure of the State by increased doses of those very poisons which had already reduced its attenuated body to a skeleton.

Their proposition was to make the monarchy strongly aristocratic—to associate with it assemblies dominated by great nobles and the Bishops, to replace each of the Ministers by a council consisting of lords and Bishops. Fénelon further urged that not only should nobles be selected for all military employment, but also for all judicial posts, and—the further to widen the barrier which already divided these favoured mortals from the commoner herd—to forbid matrimonial alliances between the nobles and the *bourgeoisie*.

The strange unison between these two personages is also remarkable for the fact that they both agreed in recommending a course of dishonesty. Fénelon suggested that all who had lent money to the State, including, of

course, many of the poorer classes who had given their all, should only be repaid one-thirtieth part of their loans. Saint-Simon went further. He said, "Give nothing at all to *cette canaille*."

Fénelon was also strongly in favour of utterly extirpating all Bishops, doctors, professors, and confessors suspected of a leaning to Jansenism. All such were to be ruthlessly ejected from their several employments.

The strange thing is that, knowing him to be so strongly imbued with the views which he held himself, the King should still have refused to allow the Prince-Archbishop of Cambrai to return to Paris.

Madame de Maintenon did not by any means share the views of this latter; she had, nevertheless, to sit by in silence and suffer, while observing the cruel humiliations which—by the agency of Tellier, Fénelon, and the famous Bull—were showered upon the devoted head of the prelate Noailles. They consisted in getting the country Bishops, or such of them as could be made to accept the Bull, to publish Bishops' charges against Noailles and Quesnel. While they designated the latter as Anti-Christ, the former, the Archbishop of Paris, found these fulminations against himself actually nailed up upon the doors of the Parisian churches.

It was useless for him to banish all the Jesuits from his diocese—he was obliged to leave Tellier, the King's confessor; and Tellier exiled the Archbishop from the Court.

The life of Madame de Maintenon, after the death of the bright, giddy Duchesse de Bourgogne, was by no means a happy one. With the passing of that brightest star of the Court, the days, whether at Versailles or Fontainebleau, passed drearily for the wife of the King. Madame de Maintenon, in both these palaces, shunned the light, passing the greater part of her days in obscure cabinets, without windows, which led off from regal apartments. She was unable, however, in her old age to escape the King. He followed her into her dark rooms and, before the pro-

mulgation of the Bull, bored her with trivialities; afterwards he bored her to death with his perpetual petulance upon the subject of the Jansenist Bishops, whom neither his bribes nor threats could induce to accept the Bull, which made of the unwilling Pope a god—of themselves nothing! She, however, had more relief after the Bull, as Louis was then kept occupied. In her letters, Madame de Maintenon complains bitterly enough of Louis. "He makes me," she says, "suffer his sorrows, his silence, his vapourings. Sometimes he is taken with fits of weeping of which he is not master, or else he feels unwell. He has got no conversation!"

To replace the Duchesse de Bourgogne, Jeannette Pincré still remained. She was kept to amuse the King, and allowed to have a husband, on condition that she did not leave Versailles. She did not, however, amuse the King sufficiently; he still, therefore, came constantly to inflict himself upon Madame de Maintenon. In her desperation, the old lady, even during the period of Court mourning, instituted the frequent performance of comedies and concerts, as a means of relieving the eternal monotony of her *tête-à-tête* existence. This, however, Madame de Maintenon alleviated in a measure by the interest which she, in common with Louis, took in little affairs of the convents as well as the reports of the police. The morals of the monks, the elections of nuns, the quarrels of the clergy, were, to both, of far more importance than the great business of the State.

By a pretence of religious devotion—anti-Jansenist, of course—any rascal could impose upon them in these latter days. A story has been recorded of a lady surprised in adultery. The lady informed the King that her husband wished to compel her to become a Protestant, whereupon the guilty woman went free, while her wronged husband was promptly imprisoned! This story is typical of the injustice which was dealt freely around after the promulgation of the Bull, which was in 1713.

Then, by force, the triumphant King constituted himself

the arm of Rome, against not only the Jansenists but the Gallicans, of whom he himself had formerly been the quasi-Patriarch, the actual Pope.

While his late enemies in Europe, and the new Emperor, Charles VI.* in Vienna, were all now, if good Catholics, obliged to bow before this monstrous ordinance—which really represented the will of the King of France—at home in Paris he had trouble. There, the spirit of the Fronde, which had driven him out as a child and caused him to seek refuge at Saint-Germain, once more reasserted itself; the King could force neither the people nor the Parliament to swallow the nauseous pill. The Parliament could not be forced to register it among their enactments in any definite form. Louis, now seventy-five years old, instituted, through the Jesuits, a reign of terror. *Curés*, Bishops, doctors, the professors at the Sorbonne, suffered from his violence. Convents were destroyed, the nuns defrocked and turned out, the Bastille and every other prison filled to overflowing. Monks followed the nuns, people of all descriptions were exiled—or closely confined to their own houses when the prisons were so full that they could contain no more. Now was the time for any man who had an enemy, or who owed a debt which he did not wish to pay, to have his revenge. It was sufficient to cry, "He is a Jansenist; he ate meat last fast day! Away with him, the Jansenist!" And away he went—perhaps from his country and his home for ever!

The Jesuits even persecuted each other with this ridiculous cry of Jansenist. Any of their number who did not display a sufficiently intolerant spirit suffered like the rest, and either went to prison or underwent punishment. It is related of one Jesuit father, who was—unlike the rest—of a merciful disposition, that he was quite bald. As a

* Note.—Charles VI. (Joseph François), Emperor of Germany, was born October 1st, 1685, and died at Vienna October 20th, 1740. He was the last of the direct Hatzburg line. Charles VI. was the second son of the Emperor Leopold I., who died 1705, and succeeded his brother, Joseph I., in 1711.

Jansenist, he was ordered never to wear again a wig upon his bald pate!

It is unnecessary to say that the Protestants, or such as remained of them, were persecuted too. Any suspected of the faith were seized and sent off to the galleys. The Atheists, however, escaped—the King's wrath had not yet descended upon them; had he lived a little longer it would have done so.

The old spirit of the Fronde soon manifested itself in Paris by a scourge which appeared to chastise the Jesuits. This was a journal, secretly published, called *The Ecclesiastical News*. The *Nouvelles écclésiastiques* lasted for eighty years, during which its office of origin was never discovered. And yet the paper was everywhere. Tellier, the Jesuit, foamed at the mouth as, week after week, their most secret histories and abominable practices were revealed to a gloating and delighted Paris. D'Argenson, the Police Lieutenant, had bundles of the journals repeatedly thrown into his carriage, but the police were as helpless as the Jesuits, or seemed so. It is more than possible that the police, acting for the Parliament—who refused to ratify the Bull—were not too willing to find out the culprits. They, too, may have been imbued by the recrudescence of the Frondeur spirit.

All this persecution told strongly in favour of the good-natured, free-and-easy Duc d'Orléans. It was well known in Paris that the design of the King, also of Madame de Maintenon, was that, if possible, the illegitimate Duc du Maine should succeed the King; if not as Monarch, yet as head of the Council of Regency and Governor of the little boy, four or five years old, left behind by the Duc de Bourgogne. Now, Maine's rule would mean a continuance of his father's rule of Jesuits and intolerance. Paris was sick of intolerance—after seventy years of Louis it sighed for freedom; but of freedom or mercy during the last two years of the King's life there was to be none.

There was a time, however, as will be seen by a reference to the *Correspondance administrative*, when the King

displayed what may be termed a relative mercy. This was between the years 1688 and 1705. Then he suspended from preaching a Carmelite who forced the new Catholics to communicate—he suggested not over-rough treatment for a girl who failed to kneel when the holy Sacrament passed in the street—he caused Seignelay to recommend humanity for some Protestant pastors who were deported to the Isles of Sainte-Marguerite. Again, during that period we find the minister Pontchartrain moderating the brutality of d'Argenson, when he tore away their children from the new Catholics; while Louis himself wrote to the Bishop of Luçon that "instruction rather than dragoons should be employed by ecclesiastics!" The Protestant galley-slave Marteilhe also mentions in his Memoirs: that the King disapproved of the Lazarist almoners of the galleys causing Protestants on board the galleys to be beaten to death for failing to kneel during the Mass.

During this same period of relative mercy the King nevertheless showed an unmerciful spirit to his old friend the Duc de la Force, of whose conversion he made a personal business. After alternately preaching to and imprisoning the Duc, the latter at length allowed that the King was right. He, however, died in the Protestant Faith. Hereupon Louis, furiously enraged, wreaked his revenge by the terrible persecution of the Duc's aged widow.

The Duc du Maine and his sisters had not only been declared legitimate by their father the King, but the Duc had been distinctly declared to be capable of succession to the Crown. For that matter, so had Philip V. of Spain, but Europe would not admit of his pretensions. In any case, the direct heir was Bourgogne's son, the little boy Louis, who—while the Duc d'Orléans the King's nephew was feared—was never taken into account. Somehow, as the child was puny and sickly, he was expected to die. Madame de Maintenon, who loved Maine as the son of her adoption, wrote pettishly of this child, who stood in his way, "He lives, in spite of every one."

A terrible blow had been struck by back-handed methods

at the Duc d'Orléans after the death of the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne. Orléans was then popular; he had not only shown great bravery in Italy, but in Spain he had shown ability as well. There he succeeded in taking Lerida, the mountain-fortress before which even le grand Condé had failed.

To sap his popularity, rumours and innuendoes were insinuated by the Maine faction—including Madame de Maintenon—working through the Jesuits and the convents, to the effect that he had poisoned the Duc and Duchesse de Bourgogne. It was an infamous calumny, since he loved the Duc dearly and wept for him as a brother; but the falsehood worked and bore fruit. At the funeral of the Duc and Duchesse, d'Orléans was hooted by the crowd, while at Marly he was left entirely alone by the Court—completely boycotted and sent to Coventry—none would speak to him.

Philippe d'Orléans thereupon demanded of the King that he should be sent to the Bastille and put upon his trial. To this, however, the King very sensibly would not agree. For, knowing the story to be a lie, he would not be so base as to give colour to it by allowing his brother's son to be placed even temporarily within the walls of a prison.

For all that, Louis was against his nephew, and, by the terms of his will and a subsequent unjust codicil, did everything within his power to prevent his having the faintest semblance of authority, even if called Regent after his death. An army, under the Duc de Villeroi, was put at Maine's disposition a day or two before the King's death; while Louis, by his codicil, gave the personal custody as well as the education of the boy-King into his hands, recommending that he should be placed in safety by Maine at Vincennes. After writing this codicil and receiving the last Sacrament, the King sent for Philippe d'Orléans and falsely assured him that he would find nothing against his interests in his will. The good-natured and deceived Duc left his treacherous uncle's bedside in a flood of honest tears. It was only the good and forcible advice of the Duc de Saint-Simon

to d'Orléans which enabled him, in the end, to frustrate the infamous plots, which left his life and liberty at the mercy of the Duc du Maine.

In his excess of good nature and indolence of disposition he was, before the King's death, perfectly contented and ready to allow matters to take their course, even after a hypocritical visit from Villeroi had—while glossing over the facts—shown to him pretty clearly that he was being quietly elbowed to one side.

Not mistrusting the King's word, however, he had no real idea of the actual danger of the position in which he was being placed. The fact was that d'Orléans had a traitor in his household, in the person of his wife. She was the youngest daughter of the King by the Marquise de Montespan, and sister to the Duc du Maine. It was a marriage which was forced upon him sorely against his will, while so furious was Madame, his mother, with him for assenting to it, that the vigorous German lady administered to her son the most tremendous box on the ear on record, with the exception, perhaps, of that given by the Marquis de Montespan to his faithless spouse.

D'Orléans always called his wife Madame Lucifer or Madame Satan. By this wife, his eldest daughter was Marie Louise Elizabeth, afterwards Duchesse de Berry.

No training could have been worse than that of this young Princesse. Owing to the indolence of her mother—whom, as the King's bastard, she was taught by her grandmother to despise—the young Marie Louise was left in evil hands. These were those of a woman named de Vienne, an ex-mistress of the Duc d'Orléans, who soon taught her to hate as well as to despise her mother. The child from an early age was a prodigy of vice—a regular Messalina. She was credited with being a second Marquise de Brinvilliers; but, although she hated the Duchesse de Bourgogne like poison, she most assuredly never poisoned her.

This precocious young girl it was who, instructed by the worthless de Vienne, may be said to have corrupted her weak father, rather than that he corrupted her. From

early girlhood she conceived an extraordinary passion for her father, and would insist upon his passing long hours in her room while she was at her toilette. Before long father and daughter used to indulge in orgies and become intoxicated in each other's company. He was her absolute slave, and put up with her passions, her caprices, her furious rages—that which she ordered or desired was his sole law. To such an extent was he under her thumb that when the time came for her marriage to the Duc de Berry, although it approached his daughter to the throne, he raised objections and strove to prevent it.

After her marriage she coveted a diamond necklace which had come to her mother on the death of the Dauphin. Nothing would satisfy the young termagant but her father must, by force, take this necklace from the Duchesse d'Orléans and personally place it upon her own neck.

He complied with her request, which was accompanied by screams of rage when he at first refused so deeply to affront his wife. The Duchesse de Berry wore the necklace triumphantly, and, when lectured by the Duchesse de Bourgogne, absolutely refused to return it to her mother.

The King himself had to be appealed to by his daughter the Duchesse d'Orléans, when Louis not only ordered his grand-daughter to return the necklace and ask pardon, but ordered de Vienne to be sent away. It was no doubt in great measure owing to the hatred of the Bourgognes and rage of De Vienne, as shown after this, that the accusation of poisoning was more easily made against the Duc d'Orléans. In any case, the affairs of the Orléans family had become the scandal of the kingdom. His own studies of chemistry, under the celebrated Humbert, lent a certain colour to the report.

The Duc d'Orléans was a man built in vigorous mould, taking more after his masculine mother than his effeminate, Italian-like father, who was probably the son of Mazarin, whereas popular rumour had pointed to a Frenchman—de Comminges—as the probable father of Louis XIV., who was born to Anne of Austria after twenty-two years of

GUILLAUME, CARDINAL DUBOIS,
Archbishop and Duc de Cambrai.

childless marriage. From his father the sole taste that Philippe inherited was that of music. Other and sensible tastes he had—for instance, those for self-instruction in the sciences—which were quite unusual in his age. He was brave as a lion, had a frank, good-humoured face, and was a man who seemed to find it impossible to remember an injury. In war he displayed a knowledge of tactics and strategy as well as personal valour. What the Duc d'Orléans was absolutely deficient in was proper pride. He was indifferent to everything, good or evil—religion, or the respect from others due to his station. He called this indifference the love of liberty.

His own bringing-up had been as bad as that of his daughter, otherwise the Duc d'Orléans had the making of a fine man in him. His infamous father put him at an early age under the charge of a man of worthless character, whom he received at the hands of his abominable *mignon*—the poisoner of the first Madame—the Chevalier de Lorraine. This rascal was Dubois, who, during the Regency, caused himself to be made sub-deacon, deacon, and priest all on the same day, in order that he should further make himself Cardinal. As a Minister, Dubois showed undoubted ability, and procured, by his persistence, the peace of Europe; but as a tutor, a bringer-up of youth, he was inferior to the worst man out of the gutter. It was through this Dubois that the unwilling assent of the young Prince was obtained to his marriage with the woman whom he detested, the King's illegitimate daughter, born of his reconciliation with Montespan in the year of the jubilee.

What could be expected of such an ill-assorted union? The other two daughters of the Duc d'Orléans displayed flightiness in various ways; but that Marie Louise owed her perversion to a misformed brain was proved by an autopsy, which the Duc de Saint-Simon, who hated the Duchesse, contrived to have made after her death. When he was assured of this fact—which he had already suspected—the Duc might have shown himself a little more generous to the memory of the poor girl, who died not long after she

was twenty. But he did not spare her memory, nor forget to let it be known that, although unmarried, she was again *enceinte* when she died. And yet his own wife was one of the ladies-of-honour to this young Princesse—who was almost Queen—and not ashamed to accept her benefits!

This want of chivalry on the part of Saint-Simon is but typical of the time, when most of the leading men were vicious and nearly all the women of the *noblesse* shared that unenviable distinction. In looking back over this history of the reign of Louis XIV., whom—except the gallant Boufflers, do we find, among all those mentioned of either sex, that can be excluded from this category of vice? Two women there are whose names stand out, that shine like stars for purity and virtue—Madame de Guyon, the Quietist authoress of *Torrents*, and Madame de la Maisonfort, the young *Chanoinesse* of Poussay. And what chivalry did they ever meet with at the hands of the great men Bossuet and Fénelon, in whom they put their trust? None whatever; those two good women, the only two really good women in this history, were deserted by the men in whom they put their trust, as by cowardly hounds. Against the character of Madame, the mother of the Regent, there certainly is nothing to say; but how can a woman of such a notoriously vigorous character be respected, much less called good, when she allowed her son to be brought up with such a training—allowed, further, her grand-daughter to grow up more like a little devil than a little lady? The first Madame also had a fine character in some ways—in that she was lovable herself, was a devoted sister, and met her sad end with courage and religion. But can we call her good? Consult her history!

Having gone so far, it is with a feeling of sadness that we look back upon the period we have portrayed; sadness that men and women—so many men and women—could be so utterly bad as those of the reign of Louis XIV. It is, however, with a feeling of relief that we are able to realise that the world is not now what it was then, when, with

the name of Christ upon their lips, men and women alike performed such devilries.

Even Louis—the Grand Monarque—died with a lie upon his lips, in the matter of the will, after partaking of the last Sacrament. It is true that he was a Jesuit; he had been affiliated to the Society some years before his death, and, as seen in the histories of the conspiracies of those days, the Jesuits who suffered in England and elsewhere often died with lies upon their lips—proved absolutely to be such—which they uttered for the good of the Church, or the cause which the Church had upheld through them.

Louis, however, did not lie for the sake of the Church, but for that of his illegitimate son Maine. And how did Maine reward this man when he was dying? By making all those assembled in an adjoining apartment roar with laughter at his coarse and grotesque buffooneries. The deceived Duc d'Orléans, on the other hand, wept.

In the last days, when Louis was supposed to be at the point of death, how do we find Tellier, Madame de Maintenon, and the Duc du Maine behaving? When, between August 13th and 25th, 1715, it was plainly visible that the King was going rapidly downhill, they surrounded him and fawned upon him until they had obtained what they wanted. The will, the codicil, the secret engagements with Villeroi to surround the Parliament with ten thousand troops to support Maine—perhaps to carry off the Duc d'Orléans—were all accomplished facts. Thus Maine and Madame de Maintenon were satisfied. Tellier, too, thrust papers into the dying man's hand for signature, but, even as the gangrene gained upon his legs, Louis was too cunning to be induced into signing the appointments to the vacant bishoprics. Apparently he mistrusted his Tellier at the last, for all that he would sign was the appointment of that worthy's nominee, Fleury, as *précepteur* and confessor to the coming King.

On the 26th there were present two prelates whom Louis had recently bribed to accept the Bull. To one of these, the pretty-complexioned and vain Cardinal de

Rohan—supposed to be his own son—he had given the Grand Almonry; to the other, Bissy, the Cardinal's hat. He was the Bishop of Meaux in succession to Bossuet. To these two the King said that "he died in submission to the Church"; and further, in reply to Madame de Maintenon, that "he had no restitutions to make personally, but, as regards those of the kingdom, he left them in the hands of God."

Neither Tellier nor Madame de Maintenon, the prelates nor Maine, troubled about the King when they had what they could get from him. They looked upon him as already dead, and would not even have said a Mass if the Captain of the Guards had not pointed out to the priests their neglect. Madame de Maintenon went off to Saint-Cyr, and Maine went to an adjoining room to play the fool by taking off Fagon, the King's old physician—imitating the grimaces he had made when a quack came in, offering to cure the King.

The quack's remedies operated so well that three days later Louis was not only still alive, but much better. Then Maintenon, Tellier, and Maine thought it as well to return to the King once more at Versailles. His illness had been chiefly brought on by his agitations, in vainly endeavouring to compel the Parliament—through d'Aguesseau, their wise President—to accept and register the Bull; it was possible, they thought, that he might yet have strength left to him not to die until he had forced the Parliament to bend to his will. For the King was terribly in earnest about the matter. Although he did not recover, his strength continued for two days longer. During the night of August 31st he was sinking, and on the morning of September 1st, before the world knew that Louis, "*Dieudonne*," was dead, Madame de Maintenon had left Versailles once more.

The Duc du Maine went off at once gaily from his father's death-bed to the Parliament; he felt now that all was secure, all was his—that he had gained the kingdom! He was, however, doomed to be foiled, for the Duc de Saint-Simon, scolding the Duc d'Orléans like a child, and

telling him that he would be called coward, had already compelled him to rouse himself.

The machinations of his treacherous wife were frustrated: M. de Guiche, the Colonel of the French Guards, had been bought for six hundred thousand *livres*. The Colonel of the Swiss Guards had given himself to d'Orléans for hatred of the cowardly Duc du Maine, whom he despised, and who was his Colonel-General.

Philippe d'Orléans himself had gained half of the Black Musketeers—under Canillac. Paris came over to him also—in the persons of d'Argenson, the Lieutenant of Police, who brought him the Watch and the Mounted Police, and the Commandant, Saint-Hilaire, who brought him the town artillery.

Although Maine knew it not, the army which the old Duc de Villeroi was to have posted all around the Parliament and upon its premises was no longer aught but the shadow of an army. The rest was in the hands of the lawful Regent, who now meant to be the real Regent. Indeed, there were some, notably Lord Stairs, the English Ambassador, who urged the Duc d'Orléans to become more than that—to seize the throne and make himself King of France.

We will not go into the details of the stormy scenes which took place in the palace of the Parliament that day. Suffice it to say that the Duc du Maine, who went into it so elated in the morning, came out at night crestfallen. His hands were tied, he was deprived of the custody of the child-King; while Philippe d'Orléans—the legitimate Prince—had been declared, with loud acclamations, by the assembled Parliament to be the supreme and only ruler, the Regent of the throne of France.

THE END

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